The Journal of Historical Review

Special Issue

ROOSEVELT AND WAR IN EUROPE 1938-40

Origins and Interventions

Mark Weber
President Roosevelt's Campaign To Incite War in Europe: The Secret Polish Documents

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The Roosevelt Legacy and The Kent Case

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A Note From The Editor

Few discussions of the specific topic "Roosevelt and the Origins of World War II" pay much attention to events before 1 September 1939. At most some preliminary words are uttered about the development of Roosevelt's thoughts and policy in the 1930s: his increasing concern, once the New Deal became firmly ensconced and especially after he was re-elected in 1936, with events in Europe and Asia as crisis followed crisis; his worries about the rise of "the dictatorships" (non-Soviet variety only); his somewhat hesitant public switch beginning in 1937 away from neutrality of *sentiment* and toward a more activist consideration of America's role in the world; his efforts thereafter to "educate" a rather unreceptive American public into appreciating this role and its possible future consequences. If Roosevelt's difficult position in the late 1930s of trying to push along public opinion on international affairs faster than it wanted to go could be termed, as one pro-Roosevelt historian has put it, "leadership in isolation," then the events in Europe leading toward war could be described, in the standard view, as "crisis in isolation"—from America; the war just happened, a European affair which Roosevelt could not appreciably influence, though he had certainly seen it coming, doing his best to warn both his own people and European leaders.

It remains the case that for most historians, thus for their students and the history-reading public at large, the real story and starting point of the origins of the war relative to Roosevelt must be that of America's involvement in the war: how this country got in *once the conflict in Europe began*. This story, actually three stories—of the 1939-41 "Battle against Isolation" within; of the "undeclared war" of navies on the Atlantic as Roosevelt did his best to evade neutrality and help out England (and, after June 1941, Russia) even to the point of intervening militarily to frustrate German attempts at interception, and of the deterioration of Japanese-American relations in the Pacific leading to Pearl Harbor—has received a considerable amount of treatment from both mainstream and revisionist historians. So too has the more generalized story of German-American and Japanese-American relations in the decade preceding 1941. But, with a few exceptions, it is just toward 1941—precisely, 7 December and 11 December 1941—that such studies aim, including those claimed specifically to be about Roosevelt's role in the *origins* of *World War II*. This—the full-fledged, declared shooting war for America—is the war that is meant. With what started in Europe two years earlier, and the prelude to it, there was—so the consensus goes—not much, if any, real Roosevelt involvement. It is not an issue.

So the dearth of treatment has made it seem. In fact, the issue of President Roosevelt's active part in the origins and partial responsibility for the outbreak of *European* war in *1939* is very real, very much alive, and very interesting. And it is not new, though it has been suppressed. Several early post-war studies—the exceptions mentioned above—written mostly in the decade after 1945 and either singular essays or parts of larger works, focused on just this question. That these were exclusively revisionist in nature says something about the nature of the issue. It has not been one that mainstream, pro-Roosevelt, historians are too enthused about. For them, there is either no story here—or one they would not feel comfortable telling. Since the appearance of the early revision-

ist efforts, which slipped easily and not accidentally into obscurity, this subject has been ignored and allowed to disappear into the murky backwaters of a forgotten branch of the stream of history.

We hope to begin remedying this situation with this, the first "theme" issue of *The JHR*. The subjects of the three essays presented here have long deserved careful consideration. It is hoped that they will help to stimulate more interest and new research in this particular topic. It is certain that their importance cannot be ignored by honest and *curious* historiography.

Mark Weber in "President Roosevelt's Campaign To Incite War in Europe" explores the meaning and historical importance of Polish diplomatic documents which were captured by the Germans in Warsaw, selections from which were published in the German press, in a *White Book* and in other official or semi-official editions. These documents, which bear heavily on the roles of Roosevelt and his ambassador-at-large William C. Bullitt in encouraging strident Anglo-French-Polish defiance of Germany's program for a peaceful revision of the unfair Versailles territorial/ethnological provisions, are of the utmost importance in understanding what Roosevelt was thinking, doing and trying to do in Europe in the prelude to war. What emerges is a Roosevelt who was no innocent bystander merely sending private, occasionally public, messages of concern to European leaders from time to time, all in the quest for peace. Instead the documents make clear the picture of a Roosevelt actively meddling in European affairs at every turn, promising, cajoling, threatening—all toward the vigorous promotion of an anti-German front, ultimately toward war. Though well known and readily available, the documents have been ignored, downplayed, or rejected by all mainstream historians, largely on account of their published origination as a German propagandistic "colored book." Denounced by American officials immediately upon release as inauthentic—forgeries concocted by the Germans—most historians have not seen fit to question the official denials and look for themselves, with the aid of much relevant evidence made available since the war, into the matter of their authenticity. It is the signal contribution of Mark Weber that he has uncovered and here marshals for the first time all the evidence which points toward the documents being, in fact, authentic; in his words, the question is now "beyond doubt." He goes beyond merely demonstrating this, presenting lengthy selections from the documents newly translated by himself (including some parts never before translated into English), and fitting their significance in to the overall context of Roosevelt's policy. The conclusions presented in this well-rounded and pathbreaking essay are clearly ones that historians of Roosevelt foreign policy will not be able to ignore.

In "President Roosevelt and the Origins of the 1939 War," excerpted from *Der erzwungene Krieg* by David L. Hoggan, we present for the first time in English the pertinent conclusions reached in what after 22 years remains the most thorough—and most radically revisionist—volume ever published on the general subject of the war's origins. Dr. Hoggan's treatment of Roosevelt in the book is incidental to his main theme, which is German-Polish and Anglo-German relations and how and why these led to war in 1939; his explication of Roosevelt's role in the crucial years

1938-39 nevertheless constitutes the most formidable (and formidably documented) narrative presentation on the subject ever to appear. It is an excellent companion piece to Charles C. Tansill's early essay "The United States and the Road to War in Europe" (which appeared in Harry Elmer Barnes's anthology *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace*), heretofore the standard treatment in English. Dr. Hoggan's treatment, with its in-depth emphasis on the last year before war, and its use of many sources not available to Tansill, effectively expands upon and updates the earlier work. It is our regret that space considerations prevent publication here of the extensive footnotes. These will, however, appear in the complete published edition of *Der erzwungene Krieg* as *The Forced War*, forthcoming from the Institute for Historical Review. Should any monograph reprint of Dr. Hoggan's article be produced—and if the reception justifies it the entire contents of this issue will be published in an expanded book format—the notes for the article will also of course appear therein.

The Weber and Hoggan essays deal with Roosevelt and secret *origins* of European war, 1938-39; the third essay here deals with Roosevelt's secret *interventions* in European war, 1940. Until recently these have not been well-known—though they have been hinted at, sometimes luridly, ever since the *New York Times* published in June 1940 a terse announcement from the American embassy in London to the effect that an employee of the embassy had been arrested and detained by the British on the grounds of (British) national security. Tyler Gatewood Kent, code-clerk, was caught with approximately 1,500 documents in his possession which had been copied or abstracted from highly secret communications passing through the embassy. A fervent anti-interventionist, Kent became convinced by what he saw coming across his desk that President Roosevelt was lying to the American people about commitments to Britain and other commitments relative to the war. He determined to collect the evidence—which included communications between Roosevelt and Winston Churchill (at a time when Churchill was merely First Lord of the Admiralty)—so that it could be presented to certain anti-interventionist senators and expose Roosevelt's secret operations to the light of day. As more details became public, the "Kent Case" became a *cause celebre* among certain anti-Roosevelt publicists and historians. Kent himself was released and returned to America in 1945. Once the facts of the "Case" were well-established with the passing of wartime secrecy, attention focused on the contents of the "Kent Documents" which had been seized from him at the time of his arrest. Not until 1972 were they released, an event which prompted a number of historical monographs on the subject (see the bibliography on p. 203). Not until 1983 has Tyler Kent himself written his own account of what he saw, what he did, why he did it, what happened to him, and what he thinks about it all in retrospect. His essay was written especially for *The JHR*. Mark Weber provides a concise introduction, highlighting the most important revelations contained in the documents, which he examined at the National Archives.

—*Keith Stimely*

President Roosevelt and The Origins of the 1939 War

DAVID L. HOGGAN

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from David L. Hoggan's book The Forced War: The Origins and Originators of World War II. The complete book will be published in hardcover by the Institute for Historical Review in December 1983. Professor Hoggan's treatment of the Roosevelt/American role in his book is not limited to one section, but runs rather through the course of the narrative as that role develops. Here we have culled the pertinent sections, providing a running commentary (italicized) which fills in the chronological gaps and gives the essential background, as presented by the author, of European events against which Roosevelt moved. The treatment of President Roosevelt in The Forced War begins in earnest in the year 1938, and that is where this article takes up the story. Crucial both to Professor Hoggan's portrayal of Roosevelt and his general thesis as to war responsibility is his assertion that in October 1938, after the Munich conference, personal control of British foreign policy passed from Prime Minister Chamberlain to his Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, who thereupon waged an unremitting campaign to force a war with Germany.

The Secret War Aspirations of President Roosevelt

The attitude of President Roosevelt and his entourage was perhaps more extreme than that of the British leaders, but at least the American President was restrained by constitutional checks, public opinion, and Congressional legislation from inflicting his policy on Europe during the period before World War II. A petulant outburst from Assistant Secretary F.B. Sayre, of the

American State Department, to British Ambassador Sir Ronald Lindsay on September 9, 1938, during difficult negotiations for an Anglo-American trade treaty, illustrated the psychosis which afflicted American leaders and diplomats. Sayre later recalled: "I went on to say that at such a time, when war was threatening and Germany was pounding at our gates, it seemed to me tragic that we had not been able to reach and sign an agreement." To imagine Germany pounding on the gates of the United States in 1938 is like confusing *Alice in Wonderland* with the *Bible*.

Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., telephoned Paris on March 14, 1938, to inform the French that the United States would support and cooperate with a Socialist measure of the Blum Popular Front Government to control, and, if necessary, to freeze foreign exchange in France. This would have been a drastic measure contrary to the international system of arbitrage and to the prevailing international financial policy of the United States. Morgenthau was eager to see Leon Blum retain the premiership in the hope that he would plunge France into conflict with Hitler. He had no compunctions about taking this step without informing either the United States Congress or American business leaders. Leon Blum, the Socialist, did not dare to go that far, and his Government fell because of an inadequate fiscal policy.

The German leaders correctly believed that the unrestrained anti-German press in the United States was profoundly influencing both public and private American attitudes toward Germany. Goebbels told United States Ambassador Hugh Wilson on March 22, 1938, that he expected criticism, and "indeed, it was inconceivable to him that writers in America should be sympathetic with present-day Germany because of the complete contrast of method by which the (German) Government was acting." On the other hand, he objected to libel and slander and to the deliberate stirring up of hatred. Wilson confided that it was not the German form of government which was at issue, but that "the most crucial thing that stood between any betterment of our Press relationship was the Jewish question." Ribbentrop was able to challenge Wilson on April 30, 1938, to find one single item in the German press which contained a personal criticism of President Roosevelt. He also intimated that the situation could be otherwise.

In early 1938, Jewish doctors and dentists were still participating in the German state compulsory insurance program (*Ortskranken-kassen*), which guaranteed them a sufficient number of patients. Wilson relayed information to Secretary of State Hull that, in 1938, 10% of the practicing lawyers in Germany were Jews, although the Jews constituted less than 1% of the

population. Nevertheless, the American State Department continued to bombard Germany with exaggerated protests on the Jewish question throughout 1938, although Wilson suggested to Hull on May 10, 1938, that these protests, which were not duplicated by other nations, did more harm than good. The United States took exception to a German law of March 30, 1938, which removed the Jewish church from its position as one of the established churches of Germany. This meant that German public tax receipts would go no longer to the Jewish church, although German citizens would continue to pay taxes for the Protestant and Catholic churches. The situation established by this new law in Germany was in conformity with current English practice, where public tax revenue went to the Anglican Church, but the Jewish churches received nothing.

On March 14, 1938, Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles complained to Polish Ambassador Jerzy Potocki about the German treatment of the Jews and praised Poland for her "policy of tolerance." Potocki, who knew that current Polish measures against the Jews were more severe than those in Germany, replied with dignity that "the Jewish problem in Poland was a very real problem." It is evident that the Jewish question was primarily a pretext of American policy to disguise the fact that American leaders were spoiling for a dispute with Germany on any terms. In September 1938 President Roosevelt had a bad cold, and he complained that he "wanted to kill Hitler and amputate the nose."

Perhaps frustration and knowledge of the domestic obstacles confronting his own policy increased President Roosevelt's fury. Jules Henry, the French Charge d'Affaires, reported to Paris on November 7, 1937, that President Roosevelt was interested in overthrowing Hitler, but that the majority of the American people did not share his views. French Ambassador Saint-Quentin reported on June 11, 1938, that President Roosevelt suddenly blurted out during an interview that "the Germans understand only force," and then clenched his fist like a boxer spoiling for a fight. He noted that the President was fond of saying that if "France went down, the United States would go down." Apparently this proposition was supposed to contain some self-evident legalistic-moralistic truth which required no demonstration.

Ambassador Saint-Quentin noted that the relations between President Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt, were especially close. This was understandable, because Bullitt was a warmonger. Bullitt was currently serving as United States Ambassador to France, but he was Ambassador-at-large to all the countries of Europe, and he was accustomed to transmit orders from Roosevelt to American Ambassador Kennedy in London or American

Ambassador Biddle in Warsaw. Bullitt had a profound knowledge of Europe. He was well aware that the British did not intend to fight in 1938, and that the French would not fight without British support. He improved his contacts and bided his time during the period of the Austrian and Czech crises. He prepared for his role in 1939 as the Roosevelt Ambassador *par excellence*. He could accomplish little in either year, because the whole world knew that the President he was serving did not have the backing of the American people for his foreign policy.

In the wake of the peaceful settlement of the Sudeten-German problem in Czechoslovakia at the Munich conference, and after a German-backed Czech-Polish agreement on the transfer of ethnic Polish territory (Teschen) to Poland, Polish Ambassador to Germany Lipski meets with German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop at Berlin in November 1938, to discuss the Danzig and Corridor questions. Little is accomplished, as Lipski carries out Polish Foreign Minister Beck's instructions not to engage in realistic discussion. But, bearing in mind Hitler's recent generous proposal of a German guarantee of Poland's Western border (provided that the Danzig question, with the question of free and sovereign German access to Danzig across the Corridor, is settled), Lipski ostensibly leaves room for a possible agreement on German road and railway access across the Corridor.

Potocki Reports from America

Lipski returned to Poland on November 22, 1938, to discuss the Danzig situation. His assurance to Ribbentrop about the superhighways and the railways had been a mere ruse designed to appease the Germans. The Polish leaders agreed that no concessions would be made to Germany either at Danzig or in the Corridor transit question. The affable manner of Ribbentrop, despite the adamant Polish stand on Danzig, impressed the Polish leaders. Beck speculated that Danzig might not be the issue after all which would produce a conflict between Germany and Poland. He suggested that Hitler might be allowing Ribbentrop unusual liberty in the Danzig question to see what he could accomplish. Lipski's attitude was similar to Beck's. His latest conversation with Ribbentrop had caused him to modify his earlier opinion that Germany would never retreat at Danzig. He suggested that the injury done to German relations with the United States by the anti-Jewish policy might affect German policy toward Poland.

Lipski tended to exaggerate the effects on German foreign relations of the demonstrations against the Jews in Germany on November 10, 1938. He prediced that a Franco-German declaration of friendship, which had been discussed by Hitler and the

French leaders since the preceding month, would never be signed because of the negative French reaction to the anti-Jewish demonstrations. This prediction proved to be false, and Ribbentrop signed the declaration at Paris on December 6, 1938.

Lipski and the other Polish diplomats were influenced in their judgment of this question at the moment by a report which had been telegraphed by Count Jerzy Potocki from Washington, D.C., on November 21, 1938. The Polish Ambassador was informed by William C. Bullitt, the American Ambassador to France who was visiting in the United States, that President Roosevelt was determined to bring America into the next European war. Bullitt explained to Potocki at great length that he enjoyed the special confidence of President Roosevelt. Bullitt predicted that a long war would soon break out in Europe, and "of Germany and her Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, he spoke with extreme vehemence and with bitter hatred." He suggested that the war might last six years, and he advocated that it should be fought to a point where Germany could never recover.

Potocki did not share the enthusiasm of Bullitt and Roosevelt for war and destruction. He asked how such a war might arise, since it seemed exceedingly unlikely that Germany would attack Great Britain or France. Bullitt suggested that a war might break out between Germany and some other Power, and that the Western Powers would intervene in such a war. Bullitt considered an eventual Soviet-German war inevitable, and he predicted that Germany, after an enervating war in Russia, would capitulate to the Western Powers. He assured Potocki that the United States would participate in this war, if Great Britain and France made the first move. Bullitt inquired about Polish policy, and Potocki replied that Poland would fight rather than permit Germany to tamper with her western frontier. Bullitt, who was strongly pro-Polish, declared it was his conviction that it would be possible to rely on Poland to stand firmly against Germany.

Potocki incorrectly attributed the belligerent American attitude solely to Jewish influence. He failed to realize that President Roosevelt and his entourage considered World War I to have been a great adventure, and that they were bitter about those Americans who continued to adopt a cynical attitude toward American militarism after President Roosevelt's quarantine speech in 1937. President Roosevelt had been one of the few advocating permanent peacetime military conscription in the United States during the complacent 1920's. Such factors were more than sufficient to prompt Roosevelt to adopt an aggressive attitude toward Germany. He had no strong pro-Jewish feelings; he jokingly said at the 1945 Yalta Conference that he would like to give the Arabian leader, Ibn Saud, five million American Jews.

The Jewish issue was mainly a convenient pretext to justify official American hostility toward Germany, and to exploit the typical American sympathy for the under-dog in any situation.

Potocki overestimated the Jewish question because of his own intense prejudices against the Jews, which were shared by the entire Polish leadership. He was highly critical of the American Jews. He believed that Jewish influence on American culture and public opinion, which he regarded as unquestionably preponderant, was producing a rapid decline of intellectual standards in the United States. He reported to Warsaw again and again that American public opinion was merely the product of Jewish machinations.

Though the unresolved issues between Germany and Poland over Danzig and the Corridor begin to come to the fore, in early 1939 the problem of Czechoslovakia—the rump, polyglot state created at Versailles, comprising many central European ethnic populations—continues to dominate European affairs. Hitler backs the aspirations for independence from the Czechs of the Slovaks, the largest minority within the artificial Czech state.

Roosevelt Propagandized by Halifax

Halifax continued to maintain a detached attitude toward the Czech problem, and he secretly circulated rumors both at home and abroad which presented the foreign policy of Hitler in the worst possible light. Hitler would have been condemned by Halifax for anything he did in Czechoslovakia. Had he decided to throw German weight behind the Czechs in an effort to maintain Czech rule over the Slovaks, he would have been denounced for converting the Czech state into a German puppet regime. His decision to support the Slovaks could be denounced as a sinister plot to disrupt the Czecho-Slovak state which the Munich Powers had failed to protect with their guarantee.

The situation is illustrated by the message which Halifax dispatched to President Roosevelt on January 24, 1939. Halifax claimed to have received "a large number of reports from various reliable sources which throw a most disquieting light on Hitler's mood and intentions." He repeated the tactic he had used with Kennedy about Hitler's allegedly fierce hatred of Great Britain. Halifax believed that Hitler had guessed that Great Britain was "the chief obstacle now to the fulfillment of his further ambitions." It was not really necessary for Hitler to do more than read the record of what Halifax and Chamberlain had said at Rome to recognize that Great Britain was the chief threat to Germany, but it was untrue to suggest that Hitler had modified his goal of Anglo-German cooperation in peace and friendship.

Halifax developed his theme with increasing warmth. He claimed that Hitler had recently planned to establish an independent Ukraine, and that he intended to destroy the Western Powers in a surprise attack before he moved into the East. Not only British intelligence but "highly placed Germans who are anxious to prevent this crime" had furnished evidence of this evil conspiracy. This was a lamentable distortion of what German opposition figures, such as Theo Kordt and Carl Goerdeler, had actually confided to the British during recent months. None of them had suggested that Hitler had the remotest intention of attacking either Great Britain or France.

Roosevelt was informed by Halifax that Hitler might seek to push Italy into war in the Mediterranean to find an excuse to fight. This was the strategy which Halifax himself hoped to adopt by pushing Poland into war with Germany. Halifax added that Hitler planned to invade Holland, and to offer the Dutch East Indies to Japan. He suggested to Roosevelt that Hitler would present an ultimatum to Great Britain, if he could not use Italy as a pawn to provoke a war. Halifax added casually that the British leaders expected a surprise German attack from the air before the ultimatum arrived. He assured Roosevelt that this surprise attack might occur at any time. He claimed that the Germans were mobilizing for this effort at the very moment he was preparing his report.

The British Foreign Secretary reckoned that Roosevelt might have some doubt about these provocative and mendacious claims. He hastened to top one falsehood with another by claiming that an "economic and financial crisis was facing Germany" which would compel the allegedly bankrupt Germans to adopt these desperate measures. He added with false modesty that some of this "may sound fanciful and even fantastic and His Majesty's Government have no wish to be alarmist."

Halifax feared that he had not yet made his point. He returned to the charge and emphasized "Hitler's mental condition, his insensate rage against Great Britain and his megalomania." He warned Roosevelt that the German underground movement was impotent, and that there would be no revolt in Germany during the initial phase of World War II. He confided that Great Britain was greatly increasing her armament program, and he believed that it was his duty to enlighten Roosevelt about Hitler's alleged intentions and attitudes "in view of the relations of confidence which exist between our two Governments and the degree to which we have exchanged information hitherto." Halifax claimed that Chamberlain was contemplating a public warning to Germany prior to Hitler's annual Reichstag speech on January 30, 1939. This was untrue, but Halifax hoped to goad Roosevelt into

making another alarmist and bellicose speech. He suggested that Roosevelt should address a public warning to Germany without delay.

Anthony Eden had been sent to the United States by Halifax, in December 1938, to spread rumors about sinister German plans, and Roosevelt had responded with a provocative and insulting warning to Germany in his message to Congress on January 4, 1939. Halifax hoped that a second performance of this kind would be useful in preparing the basis for the war propaganda with which he hoped to deluge the British public. He did not achieve the desired response to this specific proposal. Secretary of State Hull explained, in what a British diplomat at Washington, D.C., jokingly described as "his most oracular style," that the Administration was blocked in such efforts at the moment by hostile American public opinion. Halifax was comforted on January 27, 1939, when he was informed officially that "the United States Government had for some time been basing their policy upon the possibility of just such a situation arising as was foreshadowed in your telegram." This was another way of saying that the New Deal, which had shot the bolt of its reforms in a futile effort to end the American depression, was counting on the outbreak of a European war.

Halifax learned on January 30, 1939, that leading American "experts" disagreed with a few of the details of his analysis of the Dutch situation. They expected Hitler to mobilize his forces along the Dutch frontier and to demand the surrender of large portions of the Dutch East Indies without firing a shot. The ostensible purpose of this Rooseveltian fantasy would be to "humiliate Great Britain" and to "bribe Japan." This dispatch was not sent on April Fool's Day, and it was intended seriously. It enabled Halifax to see that he had pitched his message accurately to the political perspective of Roosevelt, Hull, and their advisers. Anyone in their entourage who did not declare that Hitler was hopelessly insane was virtually ostracized. Roosevelt hoped to have a long discussion with Joseph Stalin at Teheran in 1943 about the alleged insanity of Adolf Hitler. He was disappointed when Stalin abruptly ended this phase of the conversation with the blunt comment that Hitler was not insane. It was like telling the naked Emperor that he was wearing no clothes. It was evident to Stalin that Roosevelt was a clever and unscrupulous politician who lacked the qualities of the statesman.

On January 4, 1939, President Roosevelt tells Congress that U.S. neutrality policy must be re-examined. The next day, Beck and Hitler converse at Berchtesgaden. Hitler stresses German-Polish cooperation, pointing to that of the previous year over the Czechoslovakian crisis (and noting that he would have preferred a

settlement in which only Poland, Germany, and Hungary—the countries with ethnic interests within Czechoslovakia—would have participated, rather than the Great Power convocation at Munich). Though quite cordial, the conversations are unproductive in terms of concrete progress toward resolution of the Danzig and Corridor problems. But Hitler at least makes clear his attitude that Danzig would return to Germany sooner or later. Beck hides his strong private aversion to this idea behind a friendly, if reserved, mask. He does reassure Hitler of a dependable (that is: suspicious) Polish attitude toward Russia. Privately, Beck is less interested in preventing a short-range setback or even defeat for Poland than in promoting the ruin of both Germany and Russia. His attitude reflects a Polish mystique arising from World War I: a defeat of Russia by Germany, and of Germany by the Western Powers, would permit a Great Poland to emerge from the ashes of a momentary new Polish defeat.

The Poles Regard America

The Poles also attached great importance to the role of the United States. They knew that American intervention had been decisive in World War I. They knew that the American President, Franklin Roosevelt, was an ardent interventionist. Roosevelt differed markedly from his predecessor, Herbert Hoover, after whom many streets were named in Poland in gratitude for his post-World War I relief program. Hoover had been favorably impressed by a conversation with Adolf Hitler on March 8, 1938, and he was a leader in the struggle against current American interventionism. The Poles knew that Hoover, who was wrongly accused of being the father of the American economic depression, that began in 1929, had little influence on American policy in 1938. They knew that President Roosevelt was eager to involve the United States in the struggles of distant states in Europe and Asia. American opponents of Roosevelt who opposed his foreign policy were disdainfully labelled isolationists.

The Poles did not trouble themselves about the reasons for President Roosevelt's interventionism. They were too realistic to assume that he necessarily had any legitimate reasons. They were content to accept the convenient explanation of Count Jerzy Potocki, the Polish Ambassador to the United States. Potocki claimed that President Roosevelt's foreign policy was the product of Jewish influence. This was untrue, but there was little interest in Poland for an elaborate analysis of American policy. The surveys sent by the Polish Foreign Office to missions abroad rarely mentioned the American scene. The Poles recognized the importance of the American position, but they were content to leave the problem of promoting American intervention in Europe to their British friends.

Beck discussed the European situation after his return to Warsaw with American Ambassador Anthony Biddle. Biddle reported to the American State Department on January 10, 1939, that Beck was not enthusiastic about his recent trip to Germany. The most he was willing to say about his conversation with Hitler was that it had been "fairly satisfactory," and that Hitler had promised him that there would be no "surprises." Beck confided to Biddle that Hitler was disappointed about President Roosevelt's address to Congress on January 4, 1939, which had been bitterly hostile toward Germany. Biddle noted that Beck was complacent about Anglo-French relations and concerned about current Polish relations with France. Biddle reported that "Beck emphasized that Poland and France must meet at an early date to clarify their joint and respective positions *vis-a-vis* Germany. They were now both in the same boat and must face realities." It was evident from the general nature of Beck's remarks that the official Polish attitude was incompatible with the successful negotiation of an agreement with Germany.

American Ambassador Bullitt in Paris reported on January 30, 1939, that he discussed recent German-Polish negotiations with Juliusz Lukasiewicz, the Polish Ambassador. Lukasiewicz admitted that Danzig and the Corridor transit problems had been discussed. He informed Bullitt that Beck had warned Hitler that Poland might act in Ruthenia. Bullitt also discussed general German policy with Lukasiewicz, French Foreign Minister Bonnet, and British Ambassador Sir Eric Phipps. The three men agreed that Hitler would not deliberately make war on any country in 1939. These views were an interesting contrast to the alarmist reports which Halifax had sent to President Roosevelt a few days earlier.

American Charge d'Affaires Gilbert reported from Berlin on February 3rd that Hitler's basic policy in the East was friendship with Poland. It seemed certain to Gilbert that Beck would be willing to allow the return of Danzig to Germany in exchange for a 25-year Pact, and for a German guarantee of the Polish Corridor. Gilbert noted that official German circles were quite open in announcing that the reunion of Memel with East Prussia was planned for the Spring of 1939. The Germans believed that the Lithuanians, British, and French would agree to this development without any ill-feeling.

On March 14, 1939, the artificial Czech state disintegrates. The Slovakian parliament proclaims its independence. Hungarian troops enter the Ruthenian region to protect and embrace the ethnic Hungarian population there. The Czechoslovakian president, Emil Hacha, requests an immediate meeting with Hitler. On March 15th, Hacha signs an agreement with Hitler establishing

the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia on the former Czech territory. German troops move in that day, and Germany accepts the protection of Slovakian independence. Britain initially accepts the new situation, reasoning that her guarantee of Czecho-slovakia given after Munich is rendered invalid by the internal collapse of the Czech state. But on March 17th, Chamberlain—egged on by Halifax and Roosevelt—announces a stunning reversal of British policy: the end of the peace policy ("appeasement") with Germany. From now on Britain will strenuously oppose, even to the point of war, any further territorial moves by Hitler, no matter how justified.

America and the British Policy Reversal

William C. Bullitt, the leading American diplomat in Europe, was pleased by the reversal of British policy in March 1939. He knew that President Roosevelt would welcome any British pretext for a war in Europe. Ambassador Bullitt sent a jubilant report from Paris on March 17, 1939, in which he triumphantly concluded that there was no longer any possibility for a peaceful diplomatic settlement of European differences.

Halifax welcomed the enthusiastic support for a change in British policy which he received from the American Government after March 15, 1939. The collapse of Czecho-Slovakia produced a greater immediate outburst of hostility toward Germany in Washington, D.C., than in any other capital of the world. German Charge d'Affaires Thomsen reported to Berlin that a violent press campaign against Germany had been launched throughout the United States. There was much resentment in American New Deal circles when Sir John Simon delivered a speech in the British House of Commons on March 16, 1939, in support of Chamberlain's conciliatory message on the previous day. The Simon speech produced a vigorous American protest in London on March 17, 1939. Halifax replied by promising President Roosevelt that the British leaders were "going to start educating public opinion as best they can to the need of action." This is a different picture from the one presented by Gilbert and Gott [in their book *The Appeasers*] to the effect that "for most men the answer was simple" after the events at Prague on March 15, 1939. Roosevelt warned Halifax that there would be "an increase of anti-British sentiment in the United States" unless Great Britain hastened to adopt an outspokenly anti-German policy.

Roosevelt requested Halifax to withdraw the British Ambassador from Germany permanently. Halifax replied that he was not prepared to go quite that far. British opinion was less ignorant than American opinion about the requirements of diplomacy, and Halifax feared that a rude shock would be produced if

the British copied the American practice of permanently withdrawing ambassadors for no adequate reasons. He promised that he would instruct Henderson to return to England for consultation, and he promised that he would prevent the return of the British Ambassador to Germany for a considerable time. He also promised that Chamberlain would deliver a challenging speech in Birmingham on the evening of March 17, 1939, which would herald a complete change in British policy. He assured Roosevelt that Great Britain was prepared at last to intervene actively in the affairs of Central Europe.

Halifax requested President Roosevelt to join Great Britain in showing "the extent to which the moral sense of civilization was outraged by the present rulers of Germany." He knew that this lofty formulation of the issue would appeal to the American President. Roosevelt was satisfied with the response from Halifax. He promised the British Foreign Secretary that he would undermine the American neutrality legislation, which had been adopted by the American Congress, with New Deal approval, in response to pressure from American public opinion. Halifax also received the promise that American Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau would take vigorous new steps in his policy of financial and economic discrimination against Germany. Halifax was greatly encouraged by the support he received from President Roosevelt for his war policy.

Polish Foreign Minister Beck received an assurance from Juliusz Lukasiewicz and William Bullitt on March 19, 1939, that President Roosevelt was prepared to do everything possible to promote a war between the Anglo-French front and Germany. Bullitt admitted that he was still suspicious about British intentions, and he feared that the British might be tempted to compose their differences with Germany at some later date. He promised that any such deviation from a British war policy would encounter energetic resistance from President Roosevelt. Bullitt had received word from Premier Daladier that the British were proposing an Anglo-French territorial guarantee to Rumania, and the American diplomat welcomed this plan.

Bullitt informed the Poles that he knew Germany hoped to acquire Danzig, and that he was counting on Polish willingness to go to war over the Danzig question. He urged Lukasiewicz to present demands to the West for supplies and other military assistance. Lukasiewicz told Bullitt that Poland would need all the help the West could possibly offer in the event of war. Bullitt said that he hoped Poland could obtain military supplies from the Soviet Union, but Lukasiewicz displayed no enthusiasm for this possibility. He warned Bullitt that it was too early to predict what position Russia would take in a German-Polish dispute. Bullitt

recognized from this remark that Lukasiewicz was assuming that Soviet policy toward Poland would be hostile. It was equally clear that Bullitt recognized the military hopelessness of the Polish position, if the Soviet Union did not aid Poland in a conflict with Germany.

Halifax attempts to create a broad anti-German front by proposing an alliance to include Britain, France, Poland, and the Soviet Union. But the Poles are as distrustful of the Soviets as they are of the Germans, preferring to maintain a maximum independence of Soviet influence and protection from possible future Soviet moves. Nevertheless they continue in a bellicose anti-German attitude—though Germany is the only nation that could possibly offer them realistic protection from the Soviets.

Poland Rejects Halifax's Soviet Alliance Plan

Halifax discussed his alliance project with American Ambassador Kennedy on March 22, 1939, and he complained at great length about the negative attitude of Beck toward an alliance front to include both Poland and the Soviet Union. He intimated that he was resolved to continue his anti-Germany policy, and that hostilities in Europe might be expected fairly soon. He was convinced that the British Navy was more than adequate to cope with German naval forces. He urged Kennedy to request President Roosevelt to concentrate the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, as an appropriate gesture to protect Australia and Singapore from a possible Japanese attack, after the outbreak of war in Europe. Halifax admitted at last that the story of a German threat to Rumania could not be substantiated, but he assured Kennedy that [Rumanian Ambassador] Tilea's statements at London had served a useful purpose.

The moderate attitude of Hitler produced no effect on Beck on the eve of Lipski's return to Berlin. Beck told American Ambassador Biddle an outrageous falsehood about Hitler's policy toward Poland on March 25, 1939, which was a fitting prelude to his later public distortions about German policy. Beck claimed that Hitler had demanded the settlement of the Danzig question by Easter, which was only a few days away. In fact, Hitler had never set a time limit on the duration of his negotiation with Poland. Biddle reported with satisfaction on March 26, 1939, in a terse telegram: "Poland today on war footing having achieved same swiftly but quietly."

It was difficult under these circumstances for Ribbentrop to maintain the impression that peaceful negotiations between Germany and Poland were in progress. The German Foreign Office was receiving a large number of reports from friendly foreign

diplomats that the British were making all possible preparations for war against Germany, and it seemed certain at Berlin that Halifax would seek to exploit the bellicose Polish attitude. American Minister Joseph E. Davies reported to Washington, D.C., from Brussels on March 30, 1939, that in Belgium the Chamberlain speech at Birmingham was regarded as a disaster which had reversed the favorable prospects for peace in Europe.

French Ambassador Leon Noel reported to Paris that he had attended a diplomatic dinner on the evening of March 27, 1939, at which Beck, Count Michal Lubienski, and the Polish Chief of Staff, General Stachiewicz, were present. Noel complained that the Polish leaders deliberately avoided any reference to the obviously unsatisfactory recent negotiations with Germany, and that they appeared to be distracted and preoccupied with private problems. Beck was also vague in his conversations with American Ambassador Anthony Biddle, but he told Biddle on the evening of March 28th that the Polish partial mobilization was "a firm answer to certain suggestions made by Berlin."

Lukasiewicz informed Beck from Paris that he was continuing to collaborate closely with American Ambassador Bullitt. Lukasiewicz was repeatedly informed by Bullitt of the conversations between the British leaders and American Ambassador Kennedy at London. It was obvious to Lukasiewicz that Bullitt continued to distrust the British. The American Ambassador assured him that the United States would be able to exert sufficient pressure to produce a British mobilization at the peak of the next crisis. Lukasiewicz also suspected that part of this distrust reflected a childish desire on the part of Bullitt to exaggerate the importance of his own role on the European scene.

Polish Ambassador Edward Raczynski reported on March 29, 1939, that the principal fear in Great Britain seemed to be that a German-Polish agreement would be reached despite the Polish partial mobilization. The British were arguing that such an agreement would be especially dangerous because it might lead to the rapid disintegration of Soviet Russia. The Polish Ambassador had learned that American Ambassador Kennedy was personally distressed by the war policy of the British leaders, and by the support for this policy which came from President Roosevelt. Raczynski warned Beck that Kennedy appeared to be privately somewhat out of step with Bullitt in Paris and Anthony Biddle in Warsaw, but that otherwise he was reluctantly carrying out his instructions from President Roosevelt to warn the British that their failure to act would produce dire consequences. Raczynski added that he received repeated requests from the British to reassure them that Poland would not accept the German annexation of Danzig. The Polish diplomat noted that it was difficult to convince the British that Poland was really willing to go to war over the Danzig issue.

American Ambassador Bullitt did what he could to support the Polish position at Paris. Lukasiewicz informed Bullitt on March 24, 1939, that Poland would reject the pro-Soviet alliance plan and press for a bilateral alliance with Great Britain. Bullitt assured Lukasiewicz that the British would agree to such an alliance. The Polish Ambassador admitted that he did not trust the British, and he asserted that the cynical English leaders were quite capable of leading Poland into an untenable position and deserting her. He knew that Bullitt shared this attitude to some extent. Lukasiewicz reminded Bullitt of British participation in the partition of Czechoslovakia in 1938. He feared that Great Britain would offer to support Poland, and then insist on Polish concessions to Germany. He knew that until recently the British leaders had favored Polish concessions to Germany, and he was not certain that there had been a complete change in their attitude.

Bullitt used many arguments to reassure the Polish Ambassador. He declared that he was in complete agreement with every aspect of Beck's stand in the alliance question, and he regarded the creation of a solid Anglo-French-Polish front without the Soviet Union as the best thing which could possibly happen. He claimed that Halifax was not very serious about his Four Power Pact offer, and that it was mainly a gesture to increase British prestige and to appease the French. He said that the British leaders hoped that there would be a war between Germany and Russia, but that they were not eager to make commitments to the Soviet Union.

Bullitt told Lukasiewicz on March 25, 1939, that he had instructed American Ambassador Kennedy at London to tell Chamberlain that the United States was in full sympathy with the Polish position in the alliance question. Bullitt contacted Kennedy again on March 26th. Kennedy was instructed to tell Chamberlain that the United States hoped that Great Britain would go to war with Germany if the Danzig dispute produced an explosion between Germany and Poland. Bullitt told the Polish Ambassador that he was confident that the British response to these suggestions would be favorable. Halifax, of course, was not displeased to know that he had unconditional official American support for his war policy. Lukasiewicz told Bullitt on March 26, 1939, that Lipski would reject the German proposals at Berlin the same day. He praised Bullitt as "an industrious friend who at many complicated points resolved our situation intensively and profitably."

On March 22nd, Germany and Lithuania reach an agreement for the return to Germany of the ethnic German Memel district. The next day, Poland orders a partial mobilization. It follows in the last week of March with a boycott campaign against ethnic

German businesses, and a declaration that any German-caused change in the international ("Free City") status of Danzig will be regarded as an act of war. Acts of violence against ethnic Germans in Poland increase. Britain announces a doubling in size of the home army. On March 30th, several days before the planned visit of Beck to London, Halifax decides to give a "blank check" guarantee to Poland, supporting it in the event of any action which the Polish government considers a threat to its independence. Chamberlain is to announce the guarantee in the House of Commons on March 31st.

The British Guarantee and America

Halifax had made an epochal decision, and he was impatient to bring his new policy into the open. He decided not to wait until the arrival of Beck in London on April 3, 1939, before assuming a public British commitment to Poland. He wired [British Ambassador to Poland] Kennard on March 30, 1939, that a guarantee to Poland would be announced in the British Parliament on the following day. He added that this guarantee would be binding without commitments from the Polish side. He attempted to place the responsibility for his extraordinary impatience on President Roosevelt. He informed Kennard with a touch of ironical humor that the American Embassy had bombarded him with assertions that Ribbentrop was urging Hitler to invade Poland before the British assumed any commitment. This was a transparent pretext to rationalize a rash policy. It was true that Bullitt at Paris was for immediate British action, but the American diplomats at Berlin hoped that Great Britain would adopt a policy of caution and restraint. American Charge d'Affaires Geist suggested from Berlin that it would be wise for Great Britain to avoid placing obstructions before German eastward expansion. No one could have been more emphatic in deploring a hasty British guarantee to Poland.

Halifax carefully avoided giving the impression that he believed the alleged story about Ribbentrop's aggressive intentions. He did repeat the old argument that President Roosevelt and the United States of America would become hostile to Great Britain if she did not go to war against Germany. The constant reiteration of this theme by Bullitt at Paris was undoubtedly useful to Halifax. It also enabled him to shift part of the responsibility for his various moves to the United States, although in reality President Roosevelt was unable to play an active role in Europe at this stage. The official position of the United States was governed by neutrality legislation from the 1935-1937 period, and it is impossible, regardless of the attitude of Roosevelt, to saddle the United States with the responsibility for the moves which Halifax made. The decision of Halifax to confer an advance guarantee wiped

out the hopes of Hitler that personal negotiations between Halifax and Beck would end in disagreement. The friction between the two men was a very real thing when Beck came to London, and it is possible that their negotiation would have ended in failure had it not been for the previous British guarantee.

Beck arrives in London on April 3rd. He accepts the British guarantee, and offers a reciprocal promise of Polish intervention on the side of Britain in the event of war between Britain and Germany. But Halifax wants more: a wide-ranging Polish commitment to go to war with Germany if Germany attacks Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, or Denmark. Beck balks at this request for what amounts to "permanent intervention," as at renewed suggestions for a pro-Soviet alliance against Germany. The British leaders suggest that Beck transform the Polish-Rumanian alliance (an anti-Soviet pact in effect) into an anti-German pact. Beck refuses to ignore the dangers from the Soviet Union to Poland and her neighbors' Eastern borders, and rejects this proposal.

The British Propagandize Beck

The British leaders did not like Beck's response. They wished him to think exclusively in terms of destroying Germany, and to forget other considerations. In other words, they wished his thinking to be more similar to that of President Roosevelt in the United States. They began to employ the same propaganda methods on Beck which they used with Roosevelt. They began to suggest a number of hypothetical situations with their usual formula of saying "this may sound fantastic, but" what would you do in such and such a case. Beck put a stop to this by declaring bluntly that "it was against the tradition of the Polish Government to express definite opinions about third countries without directly consulting them."

Chamberlain switched from hypothetical fantasies to rumors, and he declared that he had heard Germany was planning a sudden invasion of Hungary. Beck did not like this English style of rumor-mongering. He was convinced that this assertion of alleged German designs against Hungary was entirely false. He wished that the British leaders would desist from their efforts to alarm him in this way. He assured the British leaders with studied emphasis that he was entirely convinced Germany was not planning any political action outside her present frontiers except at Danzig. This was an effective method of reminding them that Poland was indispensable to their plan of launching a British preventive war against Germany.

Theo Kordt of the German Embassy in London was able to telegraph information to Berlin on April 5, 1939, about the principal topics which had been discussed between Beck and the British leaders. Chamberlain admitted in the House of Commons on the following day that there had been no attempt to limit what might constitute a threat to Polish independence. The final word on this matter was left entirely to the Poles. Beck admitted to American Ambassador Kennedy before he left London that the British leaders had complained about the allegedly uncoooperative Polish attitude. He also claimed that he had been able to diminish this dissatisfaction somewhat in the last conversations. Beck referred cleverly to his "old friend America" and his "new friend Britain." He confided to Kennedy that he was "more than happy" to have the British blank check. He assured the American Ambassador that he did "not want to be the direct cause of plunging the world into war." This was encouraging, but Beck deprived the statement of any real meaning by admitting that he had no concrete plan to preserve the peace. Indeed, it may be safely assumed that Beck's statement to Kennedy was entirely for the record.

Kennedy talked with Halifax on April 6th. The British Foreign Secretary admitted that Beck was definitely opposed to a Russo-Polish understanding. Halifax believed that he deserved a vacation after the work of the past three weeks. He told Kennedy that Chamberlain was leaving for Scotland on the evening of April 6th, and that he was going home to Yorkshire the following morning. The Poles had their blank check, and a separate British approach to Russia would be the next step. The general European situation was discussed, and Halifax privately admitted to Kennedy that neither Hitler nor Mussolini wanted war.

Roosevelt's Policy and Beck

Bullitt was delighted at the opportunity to greet Beck on his return from England to the continent. He knew that this privilege resulted from the fact that he "was a strong admirer of the policy of Minister Beck" and enjoyed "friendly relations" with him. Bullitt discussed Roosevelt's policy with Beck at some length. He claimed that he and Roosevelt were much dissatisfied with both English and American public opinion at this point. Beck expressed mild surprise at this remark as far as England was concerned, and he indicated that he was satisfied with the atmosphere which he had encountered in England. He was quite unperturbed that a formal Anglo-Polish alliance had not been negotiated, and he observed with satisfied irony that it would require much delicacy and discretion on the part of Chamberlain to handle the guarantee agreement other than by the standards of a

normal alliance. Beck did not believe that the British Prime Minister possessed either delicacy or discretion. Beck observed, with a knowing smile to his listeners, that Chamberlain had said he was glad Poland had come instantly to an agreement with England. This amused Beck, because Poland had been waiting over a considerable period for the English offer of an agreement.

Beck admitted that Halifax had sought to entangle him with obligations to Holland, Belgium, Denmark, and Switzerland, but he did not attach serious importance to this fact. He was more interested in speculating about the German response to his visit to England and to his acceptance of the British guarantee. He declared that the alliance with England (*sojusz z Anglia*) had dealt a real blow to Hitler's plans for a German-Polish agreement. He believed that British approval of Polish aspirations at Danzig had buttressed the Polish cause there as never before. A main topic of speculation was whether Hitler would respond to the British guarantee by denouncing the 1934 Pact with Poland.

Bullitt took his leave from Beck at Lille and returned to Paris. He sent an exuberant report to Washington, D.C., at 11:00 p.m. on April 7, 1939. He informed Roosevelt and Hull that Beck was immensely pleased by recent developments in England, and that the degree of understanding which had been achieved was quite adequate to fill Polish needs. Beck had said that he knew that Hitler would be furious. Bullitt also added with obvious satisfaction that Beck had described Ribbentrop as a "dangerous imbecile."

Poland's Use of the British Guarantee

It was likely that the Poles would seek to provoke Germany into attacking them. Unlike Germany, they could not expect to achieve any of their objectives in a major war through their own efforts. Their hope of ultimate victory rested with distant foreign powers. The Polish leaders were far more enthusiastic about a German-Polish war than Hitler ever was, but considerations of high policy suggested the wisdom of a role which was at least passive in appearance.

Poland was counting on the support of Halifax for the realization of her program at the expense of both Germany and Russia. It was conceivable that Halifax could lead Great Britain into a war which began with a surprise Polish invasion of Germany, but the Polish leaders knew that France and the United States were also of decisive importance to British policy. The Poles knew that Halifax would never support Poland unless he could drag France into war. This policy was dictated by the simple fact that Halifax did not believe Great Britain could win a war against Germany without the participation of France. The Poles also knew that it

would be difficult for President Roosevelt to arouse the American people against Germany unless it was possible to maintain that Poland was the innocent victim of German aggression.

Polish provocation of Germany after March 31, 1939, was frequent and extreme, and Hitler soon had more than a sufficient justification to go to war with Poland on the basis of traditional practices among the nations. Nevertheless, Hitler could not justify German action, unless he believed that he was prepared to meet the consequences. He hoped to avoid war with Great Britain, and he knew that he would run a grave risk of an Anglo-German war if he invaded Poland. It was for this reason that German-Polish relations became progressively worse over a long period before they produced a conflict. Hitler, who was usually very prompt and decisive in conducting German policy, showed considerable indecision before he finally decided to act, and to face the consequences. He did not abandon his hope for a negotiated settlement with Poland until he realized that the outlook for such a settlement was completely hopeless.

French Foreign Minister Bonnet is not as enthused as his allies the British over the guarantee to Poland. Learning that Marshal Smigly-Rydz, the commander-in-chief of Poland's armed forces, expressed delight at the guarantee, he fears Polish cockiness and foolhardiness now that Britain, dragging along France, stands unconditionally behind Poland whatever Poland does. Bonnet continues to desire a Western/Polish accomodation with the Soviets, fearing that a Western guarantee alone will not be enough to stop any Hitler moves for Danzig and the Corridor. All this is communicated to the Polish ambassador at Paris, Lukasiewicz. Marshal Smigly-Rydz proclaims with satisfaction to assembled Polish diplomats that an immediate war with Germany is quite possible, and that such a war would mean the end of Germany.

Bullitt, the French, and the Americans

Lukasiewicz was less sanguine than Smigly-Rydz about the position of the Western Powers following the British guarantee. He discussed the situation with American Ambassador Bullitt on April 9, 1939. He said that he hoped France would attack Germany from Belgium in the event of war, but he was pessimistic about the future course of French policy. Bullitt and Lukasiewicz also discussed their recent meeting with Beck. The American Ambassador told Lukasiewicz that he had given President Roosevelt extensive information about Beck's analysis of the situation. Beck had claimed that basically Hitler was a timid Austrian who might be expected to avoid a war against determined and strong

opponents. He said that "it should be obvious now to Hitler that threats to Poland would get Germany nowhere." These exuberant remarks seemed less convincing to Lukasiewicz after his conversation on the previous day with Bonnet.

Bullitt was dissatisfied with the attitude of the French leaders, and he was inclined to blame what he considered the unwarranted complacency of American public opinion. He complained to President Roosevelt in a report on April 10, 1939, that the American public was not aware of the alleged direct threat to the United States from Germany, Italy, and Japan. He hoped that Roosevelt could do something to arouse the American people. His complaint was the decisive factor in persuading President Roosevelt to deliver sensational and insulting public notes to Mussolini and Hitler on April 15, 1939, after the Anglo-French guarantees to Rumania and Greece. Bullitt complained that [French Premiere] Daladier was unresponsive to the attempt of Lukasiewicz to secure the same blank check from France which had been presented to Poland by England. Kennedy reported to Roosevelt from London on April 11, 1939, that Halifax was still pretending to entertain an idealistic hope for peace. Kennedy naturally supposed that it might be worthwhile for the British Foreign Secretary to announce to the world that peace was still possible, but Halifax claimed that to do so would convince everyone that he was "burying his head in the sand." These remarks illustrate the method by which Halifax sought to convince people that he was merely the prisoner of larger events.

The Roosevelt Telegrams to Hitler and Mussolini

President Roosevelt was doing everything in his power to increase alarmist sentiment in the United States. He announced at Warm Springs, Georgia, on April 9th that he might not return for his annual autumn health cure, because it was quite possible that the United States and the European countries would be involved with the problems of a major European war by that time. Fortunately, much of the reaction to this statement in the United States was extremely hostile, and many foreign observers concluded that this was merely an expression of wishful thinking on the part of the American president.

The British expected some lively developments at Danzig after their guarantee to the Poles. They did not realize that Hitler had ordered the Danzig authorities to go to extreme lengths in seeking to conciliate the Poles. British Ambassador Kennard heard on April 12, 1939, that Lipski had returned to Warsaw from Berlin. He suspected that this might indicate some new developments of major importance in the Danzig question. He asked Beck for the latest news about Danzig, but he was told that nothing had changed.

The quiet at Danzig began to annoy Kennard. He called at the Polish Foreign Office ten days later to insist that Great Britain was "entitled" to receive information about any new steps at Danzig. He noted that the Germans were blaming Great Britain for the deadlock at Danzig, and he claimed that the British were "somewhat anxious" about the situation. Kennard was told once again that there was nothing to report. The Germans had requested the return of Danzig and a transit corridor to East Prussia. The Polish diplomats believed that the Germans expected Lipski to appear some day with "proposals of a detailed nature." Kennard was not told whether or not such proposals would actually be presented to the Germans by Poland.

The evasive vagueness at the Polish Foreign Office irritated Kennard. He complained to Halifax, and he noted with malicious satisfaction that there were objections to Beck in Polish financial circles. It was known in Poland that Beck had said nothing about British economic assistance during his visit to London. He had proudly emphasized Poland's alleged preparedness and strength. The Polish financiers regarded this as an unpardonable and expensive blunder.

Beck was waiting impatiently for Hitler's response to Polish acceptance of the British guarantee. He wondered if Hitler would abrogate the 1934 Pact, which Poland had violated by accepting the guarantee. He did not realize that Hitler had no intention of increasing Poland's sense of self-importance by devoting a special public message to this matter. Hitler knew that the repudiation of the Pact would be a step of major importance which could scarcely be confined to an official communique and a few reports in the newspapers. This problem was unexpectedly resolved for Hitler by President Roosevelt. The American President responded to Bullitt's suggestion for an important move to influence American public opinion by committing a colossal diplomatic blunder, which played directly into Hitler's hands.

Roosevelt disclosed to the American public on April 14, 1939, the contents of telegrams to Mussolini and Hitler which were received in Rome and Berlin on the following day. Roosevelt sought to create the impression that Germany and Italy were exclusively responsible for every threat to European peace. He presented himself as an unselfish peacemaker, who had expended much thought and energy to devise a plan to remove the danger of war. This peace plan required Germany and Italy to declare that they would abstain from war under any and all circumstances for ten to twenty-five years, and to conclude non-aggression pacts with a large number of states, of which several had no independent existence other than in the imagination of the American President.

The Roosevelt message met with a vigorous response in the German press. The German journalists wondered if the United States would agree not to attack Haiti or Santo Domingo within the next twenty-five years. Joseph Goebbels addressed three questions to the American public on April 17, 1939. He wondered if they recognized that Roosevelt was similar to Woodrow Wilson in his desire to promote a permanent policy of American intervention throughout the world. He asked if the American people recognized that Roosevelt's recent message was a new maneuver to destroy the American neutrality laws, rather than to promote world peace. He inquired if they realized that Roosevelt had advocated a common American front with Bolshevism since his Chicago Quarantine speech in October 1937. The German press announced on April 17th that Hitler would answer President Roosevelt for the German people in a speech to the German Reichstag on April 28, 1939. This step had been agreed upon by Hitler and Ribbentrop in a special conference on the previous day.

Hitler was presented with an opportunity to deal with the Poles as a secondary factor in a general situation. He planned to devote the greater part of his message on the Pact with Poland to a careful criticism of the American President and to a criticism of English policy. He also intended to abrogate the 1935 Anglo-German naval treaty. Hitler ordered the German press to abstain from criticizing the Poles during the period before he delivered his speech.

Marshal Goering was on a visit to Italy from April 14th until April 16, 1939. He had instructions from Hitler to discuss the total context of Italo-German relations. Ribbentrop was somewhat uneasy about the Goering official mission at this crucial stage when he was seeking to promote an Italo-German alliance. He was relieved to learn later that the Goering mission was completely successful.

Goering discussed the Roosevelt telegrams with Mussolini and Ciano on April 16, 1939. He told Mussolini that it was difficult to avoid the impression that the American President was mentally ill. Mussolini criticized the factual text of the telegrams. It was ridiculous to request Germany and Italy to conclude non-aggression pacts with Palestine and Syria, which were British and French mandates rather than independent states. Mussolini was interested in improving Anglo-Italian relations, and he elected to react publicly to the American challenge in a minor key. A brief initial expression of indignation was followed by Mussolini's speech at Rome on April 29, 1939. The Italian leader merely denounced the alarmists who sought to disturb international relations, and he emphasized that Italy was peacefully preparing

for the International Exposition in Rome scheduled for 1942. The privilege of delivering a detailed reply to the American President was left entirely to Hitler.

The difficult situation between Germany and Poland was a touchy subject in the conversations between Goering and the Italian leaders. Goering did not attempt to minimize the seriousness of the situation, and he complained that "England had deviated from her old line . . . (and) now obliged herself in advance to render support (to Poland, Rumania, and Greece), and that under conditions which could be determined by the other partner." Mussolini declared that in the existing dangerous situation it was important for the Axis Powers to revert to passive policies for an indefinite period. This seemed to be the only way to cope with the warlike attitude of the British Government. Goering hoped that it would be possible to settle German differences with Poland by peaceful negotiation, and he predicted that Roosevelt would have little chance for re-election in 1940 if the basic European situation remained unchanged. He admitted that an increase in provocative Polish measures against Germany might force German action against Poland. It was evident that the problem of Poland had become the problem of Europe at this hour.

Ribbentrop was encouraged by the Goering visit to press for a separate Italo-German alliance. The first official discussion of such an alliance took place in May 1938, when Hitler visited Italy. The original plan was to extend the anti-Comintern Pact into an alliance by including the Japanese. It became increasingly evident as time went on that the Japanese were unwilling to proceed this far. The Japanese feared that such an alliance might involve them in difficulties with Great Britain at a time when they were seriously committed in China. The German and Italian attempts to mediate between Japan and Nationalist China in 1938 were unsuccessful. Ribbentrop telephoned a last special appeal to the Japanese for an alliance on April 26, 1939, by way of German Ambassador Ott in Tokio. The reply to this appeal was negative as expected, and Ribbentrop proceeded to concentrate his efforts on a separate Pact with the Italians. He knew that this was a difficult project, because many Italians doubted the wisdom of an alliance connection with Germany. He also knew that the Italian leaders might seek to impose reservations which would deprive the alliance of its full effect.

The Roosevelt message of April 15, 1939, was helpful to Ribbentrop in improving German contacts with a number of countries. Ribbentrop also had the satisfaction of knowing that the British were not pleased by the crudeness of the Roosevelt telegrams. Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, the British Charge d'Affaires in Berlin,

declared quite candidly at the German Foreign Office on April 17, 1939, that the British regarded Roosevelt's messages as "a clumsy piece of diplomacy." Bullitt at Paris attempted to appease Roosevelt by placing the unsavory situation in a positive light. He claimed that Daladier had been "encouraged" by the latest move of the American President.

Ribbentrop dispatched instructions on April 17, 1939, to the German envoys in the countries named by President Roosevelt, with the exceptions of Great Britain and France and their possessions, and Poland and Russia. The envoys were to inquire if these countries believed themselves threatened, and if their Governments had authorized President Roosevelt's plan. The German Government knew that they would receive negative answers to both questions, but in coping with Roosevelt they required explicit confirmation of these assumptions.

The British were actively pursuing their policy against Germany in the period of the Roosevelt messages. Polish Ambassador Potworowski reported to Beck from Stockholm on April 15, 1939, that the British were putting pressure on Sweden to join them in blockading Germany during a future war. The Swedes resented the British attempt to dictate their policy, but it was evident to Beck that England was preparing her future blockade of Germany with single-minded energy. Halifax was employing sphinx-like silence as a weapon against his critics in the British House of Commons. He ignored charges that Poland and Rumania would never permit Soviet troops to operate on their territory, and that the guarantees extended to those countries rendered impossible a treaty with Russia. Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Rab Butler refused to reply to a direct question on April 18, 1939, about the role of Danzig in the British guarantee to Poland. Only one speaker in the House of Commons contended that Poland and Rumania alone had sufficient troops to cope successfully with the Germans. The House as a whole found it quite impossible to accept such a contention.

Hitler's Reply to Roosevelt of April 28, 1939

British Ambassador Henderson appeared rather pessimistic when he called at the German Foreign Office on April 27, 1939. He had returned to Berlin the previous day, after having been compelled to remain forty days in England at the insistence of Halifax, who had waited until April 20, 1939, before announcing in the House of Lords that Henderson would soon return to Germany. Henderson admitted to [German State Secretary] Weizsaecker that he had suffered a great loss of prestige at the British Foreign Office. The reaction there toward the reports he had sent home before the March 1939 Czech crisis was distinctly

negative. He complained that the task of defending recent German policy had been rendered difficult by Hitler's various earlier statements that he did not intend to seize purely Czech-populated territory. This situation was not changed by Hitler's willingness to negotiate about the current situation at Prague, because the British Government was unwilling to do so. Weizsaecker complained about the British guarantee to Poland, and he declared that it was "the means most calculated to encourage Polish subordinate authorities in their oppression of Germans there. Consequently it did not prevent, but on the contrary, provoked incidents in that country." Henderson submitted a formal statement about the British announcement of April 26, 1939, that peacetime military conscription had been established in Great Britain. The French leaders had requested the British to take this step as early as April 1938, and the German leaders had recognized for some time that the British were planning to introduce formal conscription to supplement the 1938 National Service Act. Weizsaecker told Henderson that the British note would receive formal acknowledgement, but that nothing would be done before Hitler's speech on the following day. He told Henderson that the text of Hitler's speech had gone to press. The printed text of the speech was delivered to the Diplomatic Corps in Berlin before Hitler addressed the Reichstag.

Hitler had received considerable American advice for the preparation of his speech. Some of this had reached him by way of the American press, and the rest by means of private communication to the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. The German Government was especially grateful for the suggestion of General Hugh Johnson, who had administered the National Recovery Act for President Roosevelt. Hitler had received through Hans Thomsen, the German Charge d'Affaires in Washington, D.C., the detailed suggestions of General Johnson on April 24, 1939. Hans Dieckhoff, the last German Ambassador to the United States, had also made a number of suggestions. Dieckhoff worked at the German Foreign Office in Berlin after his permanent return from the United States in November 1938. He made no secret, in his conversations with the Diplomatic Corps in Berlin, about his fear of American intervention in the event of a new European war, and he expressed this concern in his suggestions to Hitler on April 25, 1939. He was convinced that President Roosevelt intended to invade Europe with powerful American forces in the course of any future war, and he added: "I do not believe that there are elements in the USA which have courage enough or are strong enough to prevent this." Hitler was impressed by this warning, but he continued to hope for American neutrality in any possible future European conflict.

The German Foreign Office on April 27, 1939, completed the preparation of notes to be delivered at noon on April 28th in London and Warsaw. The notes announced German abrogation of the 1934 non-aggression Pact with Poland and of the 1935 Anglo-German Naval Pact. The note to the Poles, which contained a review of recent German-Polish difficulties, was more than twice the length of the note to London.

Kennard surveyed the Polish scene for Halifax on April 26, 1939. He claimed that Poland might have fought Germany without British support, but he assured Halifax that the Poles after they received the British guarantee believed it was "absolutely fundamental" to fight Germany. The German note announcing the abrogation of the 1934 Pact with Poland was delivered at Warsaw early on the morning of April 28, 1939. Beck's immediate reaction was one of unbridled scorn. He noted that the Germans still envisaged the possibility of negotiation with Poland. He declared to his subordinates that Hitler was seeking to solve his problems by diplomacy, and he vowed that he would not permit Poland to be imposed upon in this way. Beck had anticipated Hitler's address on April 28th by persuading the Polish military authorities to declare a state of alert and danger of war for the Polish Navy based at Gdynia.

French Ambassador Coulondre at Berlin discussed the situation with Lipski. The French Ambassador complained that the European scene was very confused, and that this was due in no small measure to the fact that the British in their diplomacy rushed abruptly from one extreme to another. Lipski described in detail the German offer for a settlement which Poland had rejected. Coulondre and Lipski agreed that the German offer was remarkably generous. Coulondre hoped to discover the true motive for Polish policy, but the Polish Ambassador merely mentioned that it was the avowed purpose of the Polish leaders never to be dependent on either Moscow or Berlin.

The day of Hitler's greatest oratorical performance had arrived. The German Reichstag assembled on the morning of April 28, 1939, under the presidency of Marshal Hermann Goering. It received a good-humored speech from Hitler, which American Charge d'Affaires Geist described as his "lighter vein of oratory." The Reichstag reciprocated this mood, and Geist noted that many of Hitler's remarks were received with "malicious laughter." The laughter seemed malicious to Geist because it was at the expense of the American President.

Hitler carefully left the door of negotiation open toward both Great Britain and Poland. He made it clear that he intended to remain moderate in his future negotiations with these two states.

He began his remarks by referring briefly to Roosevelt's telegram. He explained the German disillusionment in council diplomacy, which was the inevitable heritage of the deceitful mistreatment of Germany at Versailles. He had a formula which enabled Germany to participate in all negotiations with renewed confidence. The formula was a healthy determination to protect German national security. Hitler admitted that he did not believe Germany ever should negotiate again when she was helpless.

He analyzed and explained many of his principal domestic and foreign policies from 1933 until the German occupation of Prague in March 1939. He treated the prelude to the occupation of Prague at great length. He pointed out that deviations from the Munich conference program began at an early date. The Czechs and Hungarians in October 1938 appealed solely to Germany and Italy to mediate in their dispute, although at Munich it had been decided that mediation was the obligation of the Four Powers.

Hitler placed special emphasis in the latter part of his speech on the failure of the United States to emerge from the world economic depression under Rooseveltian leadership. He announced that Germany was responding to Roosevelt's initiative of April 15, 1939, by proceeding to conclude non-aggression pacts with a number of neighboring states. But he ridiculed the idea of non-aggression pacts with states on different continents, or with so-called states which actually did not enjoy independence. Ridicule was Hitler's chief weapon, next to facts and statistics, in his reply to Roosevelt. He had been genuinely amused by Roosevelt's telegram, and he succeeded in avoiding the impression that he was personally angry with the American President. Hitler made it appear that Roosevelt's constant efforts to provoke him had been mere slaps at the water of the vast Atlantic ocean which separated the two countries.

The German Chancellor paid glowing compliments to the British Empire, and he stressed his desire for permanent Anglo-German friendship. He revealed that he had decided with reluctance to abrogate the Anglo-German Naval Pact. He suggested that British resentment toward recent German foreign policy successes might have prompted the British leaders to select Poland as an obstacle to place against Germany.

Hitler devoted less than a tenth of his speech to Poland. He explained that he respected Polish maritime interests, and that this had prompted him to proceed with extreme moderation in the Corridor question. He praised Marshal Pilsudski for his desire to improve German-Polish relations. Hitler explained that in 1934 the two states had renounced war as an instrument of national policy in their relations. This was in accord with the terms of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. The pact had recognized one signifi-

cant exception to this declaration on behalf of Poland. The Poles were allowed to maintain military obligations to France which were directed exclusively against Germany.

Hitler mentioned the many important questions which had not been settled either by the 1934 Pact or by his own efforts for a more comprehensive German-Polish agreement. He described in detail all the points of his offer for a general settlement with Poland. He declared that the Polish counter-proposals offered no basis for an agreement. They envisaged no change in the existing unsatisfactory situation with the exception of the suggestion to replace League authority at Danzig with a German-Polish guarantee. The German Chancellor regretted Poland's decision to call up troops against Germany, and to reject the German offer. He deplored Polish acceptance of the British guarantee. He announced that Germany was no longer willing to offer her October 1938 proposals as the basis for a settlement of differences with Poland. He explained that he was abrogating the 1934 Pact with Poland, which he had offered to extend for twenty-five years, because the Poles had violated it by accepting the British guarantee. He remarked that no non-aggression pact could survive a unilateral departure from its provisions by one of the contracting parties.

Hitler declared that the abrogation of the Pact did not mean that Germany would refuse to assume new contractual obligations toward Poland. He insisted that, on the contrary, "I can but welcome such an idea, provided, of course, that there arrangements are based on an absolutely clear obligation binding both parties in equal measure." Hitler avoided treating the Polish issue as the climax of his remarks. The principal theme throughout the speech was his reply to President Roosevelt, which he sub-divided into twenty-one principal points. He created the impression that such momentous decisions as the repudiation of important pacts with Great Britain and Poland were an anti-climax compared to his debate with the American President.

The immediate reaction to Hitler's speech in Poland was hostile, although French Ambassador Noel observed that Hitler was pressing for negotiations rather than closing the door. The Polish Government announced that Beck soon would reply to Hitler in the Polish Sejm. *Polski Zbrojna* (*The Polish Army*) described Hitler's abrogation of the 1934 Pact as a tactical blunder. One Polish editor claimed that Hitler's speech gave the Polish press a moral basis to attack Germany without restraint. Wild rumors accompanied Hitler's announcement of his proposals to Poland. It was claimed in Warsaw that the Germans had demanded a superhighway corridor through Polish West Prussia over fifteen miles in width instead of the actual 5/8 mile. The

Gazeta Polska claimed that Poland would have to go further in Danzig than she had done in the past. One million Polish soldiers under arms by the beginning of summer was considered a minimum necessity. The *Dziennik Narodowy* (National Daily), a National Democratic paper, asked whether or not Danzig really wished to return to the Reich. It was suggested that possibly a handful of Nazis in the Free City were making all the noise. A rumor circulated that Poland had decided to establish a protectorate in Danzig based on the model of Bohemia-Moravia. The *Kurjer Warszawski* (Warsaw Courier) expressed the general sentiment that Hitler would not ask anything of Poland if he were really a generous person.

This time the German press retaliated. Joseph Goebbels had received permission to unshackle the press after the Reichstag speech. It was hoped that the German press, and an aroused German public opinion, would be effective weapons in inducing the Poles to negotiate under the less friendly circumstances which prevailed after the British guarantee. Goebbels himself began the campaign in *Der Angriff* (*The Assault*) with a commentary on the Polish press, entitled: "Do they know what they are doing?" The article was studded with citations, and its main thesis was that irresponsible Polish journalists were violating the precepts of Pilsudski. Hans Fritzsche, who was one of Goebbels' chief assistants in the newspaper campaign, later recalled that "each larger German newspaper had for quite some time an abundance of material on complaints of the Germans in Poland without the editors having had a chance to use this material." When the restrictions were removed, "their material now came forth with a bound."

American Ambassador Bullitt at Paris refrained from reporting the reactions of Daladier and Bonnet to Hitler's speech, but he claimed that Secretary-General Alexis Leger at the French Foreign Office had denounced Hitler's oratory in sharp terms. The German Embassy in Paris reported on April 29, 1939, that the moderate tone of Hitler's speech had produced a reassuring effect on the French leaders. Charge d'Affaires Theo Kordt also reported from London that Hitler's speech had produced a conciliatory effect in England. American Ambassador Biddle at Warsaw submitted a report to Washington, D.C., on April 28, 1939, which contained a tortuous attempt to square the circle in the face of Hitler's logic, and to support the Polish stand against Germany. German Charge d'Affaires Thomsen reported the American press reaction to Hitler's speech on April 29, 1939. He expressed his personal fear that the Western countries would make an irresistable effort to produce a new World War out of the Danzig-Corridor problem. President Roosevelt read the Eng-

lish translation of Hitler's speech on April 28, 1939. Hitler's ridicule threw Roosevelt into a violent rage and produced undying hatred of Hitler personally. This personal factor was added to the other motives which prompted Roosevelt to desire the destruction of Germany. Roosevelt had been doing everything possible to promote war in Europe before Hitler's speech. Now his personal hatred of Hitler might cause him to make some mistake even more foolish than the telegrams of April 15, 1939, to Hitler and Mussolini. He did not have the support of the American public for his war policy, and it was possible that a few more blunders might lead to the total failure of his policy.

Throughout the late Spring and into the Summer of 1939, relations between Poland and Germany worsen, as Beck—with the reassurance of the British guarantee behind him—remains adamant in not negotiating with Germany over the Danzig and Corridor questions. Militarist and expansionist sentiment runs high in Poland; prominent Polish newspapers print maps claiming that large slices of German territory in fact belong to Poland ethnically and historically. Incidents of terror against the German minority in Poland increase. German schools in Poland are closed on a large scale. Germany appeals to Poland to stop the wave of terror and violence within its borders, to no avail.

Potocki Urges a Change in Polish Policy

The Germans were forced to conclude that attempts to arouse sympathy for the German minority in the West or to exert indirect pressure on Poland were ineffective. The only alternatives were direct intervention or passive acquiescence in the final elimination of the German minority. There were many indications that hostility toward Germany was increasing simultaneously in Great Britain and the United States. Charge d'Affaires Thomsen sent word from Washington, D.C., on May 17, 1939, that President Roosevelt had told the Senate Military Affairs Committee that it would be a very good thing if both Hitler and Mussolini were assassinated. The situation in France was less unpromising. Ambassador Welczeck reported on May 20th that French Foreign Minister Bonnet had assured him on the previous day that he maintained his firm belief in the advantages of Franco-German cooperation. Bonnet declared that he was not folding his hands in his lap, and that he was working actively on a plan to preserve the peace. Official circles in the United States and Great Britain were more or less in step with Polish fanaticism, whereas France was obviously reluctant to go along with it.

Beck was faced at this time with several pleas from Polish diplomats for an understading with Germany. Polish Ambassador

Jerzy Potocki, who was on leave from the United States, discussed the situation with Beck at the Polish Foreign Office on July 6, 1939. He told Beck that he had returned to Poland with the express purpose of proposing a change in Polish policy. He complained that the United States and England were suffering from a severe war psychosis. There had been wild rumors on the ship which brought him to Europe that the Germans had occupied Danzig. He insisted that the Jews, the leading capitalists, and the armament manufacturers of the West were united in a solid front for war. They were delighted to find their pretext in the Danzig issue and in Poland's defiant attitude. Potocki added that the most repulsive factor was their complete and cold indifference to the destruction of Poland.

Potocki insisted that the Poles were merely negro slaves in the opinion of the Western profiteers. They were expected to work without receiving anything in return. He sought to appeal to Beck's vanity by claiming that the Polish Foreign Minister was the only man they feared in Poland. He argued that the United States, despite Roosevelt's fever for intervention in Europe, were actually concentrating their own imperialist drive on Latin America. He assured Beck that it would be sheer illusion to expect the United States to intervene in Europe on behalf of Poland. Potocki was forced to conclude that his eloquent arguments produced no effect on the Polish Foreign Minister.

Polish Ambassador Sokolnicki at Ankara supported Potocki in this effort. He was a close friend of Jan Szembek, and it was evident to Potocki and Sokolnicki that Szembek would accept their position if he were Polish Foreign Minister. It seemed likely, too, that Pilsudski would have rejected the Beck policy had he been alive. Sokolnicki confided to German Ambassador Papen at Ankara on July 14, 1939, that he would like to see a negotiated settlement between Germany and Poland before the Jews and the Free Masons had convinced the world that a catastrophic conflict was inevitable. The Polish diplomat added that he would be pleased to see the Anglo-Soviet alliance negotiations end in failure as soon as possible.

The American diplomats in Europe continued to oppose peace and urge war. Bullitt was disgusted with the failure of Bonnet to encourage Poland with a blank check at Danzig. He continued to warn Roosevelt that the French Foreign Minister was working for peace. Bullitt was delighted at times to find that Bonnet was pessimistic about the chances for peace. He reported with satisfaction on June 28, 1939, that Bonnet could see no way out for Hitler other than war. Biddle at Warsaw gave uncritical support to Polish policy at Danzig. He claimed in a report on July 12, 1939, that Viktor Boettcher, the unofficial Danzig foreign minister and a

close personal friend of [League High Commisionar at Danzig] Burckhardt, had become openly aggressive and was no longer a "repressed imperialist." Biddle failed to explain why a man who desired the reunion of his native city with his native country, according to the wishes of the vast majority of both parties, was an imperialist.

By the beginning of August, tensions between Germany and Poland are at the boiling point. The anti-German incidents have continued unabated. Thousands of ethnic German refugees flee Poland and are sheltered by Germany. Marshal Smigly-Rydz is more bellicose than ever. The Polish government engages in provocations and takes economic reprisals at Danzig. On August 4th, a Polish ultimatum is presented to the Danzig Senate, notifying it that the frontiers of Danzig will be closed to the importation of all foreign food products unless the Danzig government promises that it will not interfere with the activities of Polish customs inspectors. Since the Danzig populace depends in the main on food from the outside to survive, this is a formidable threat. Germany is outraged.

Roosevelt Responds to the Crisis of Early August

American Ambassador Bullitt at Paris informed President Roosevelt on August 3, 1939, that Beck was predicting that an intense and decisive phase of the crisis between Germany and Poland might occur before August 15, 1939. President Roosevelt knew that Poland was obviously to blame for the crisis which began at Danzig on August 4th, and he was alarmed at the prospect that the American public might learn the truth about the situation. This could be a decisive factor in discouraging his program for American military intervention in Europe. He instructed Under-Secretary Sumner Welles on August 11, 1939, to order American Ambassador Biddle to advise the Poles about this problem. President Roosevelt urged the Poles to be more clever in making it appear that German moves were responsible for any inevitable explosion at Danzig.

The response of Beck to American intervention was not encouraging. Biddle reported to President Roosevelt, at midnight on August 11th, that the Polish Government had decided that there could be absolutely no concessions to Germany. Beck was obviously unwilling to engage in a series of elaborate but empty maneuvers which might have been useful in deceiving the American public. Beck wished the American President to know that he was content at the moment to have full British support for his policy. Beck showed Biddle a report from Polish Ambassador Raczynski at London on August 13, 1939. The report contained the explicit approval of Halifax for recent Polish measures at Danzig.

Since March Halifax has been courting Russia for an Anglo-French-Soviet alliance, if not with Poland then without her (though her at least passive acquiescence to any arrangement would have to be obtained). The British and French missions to Moscow proceed into August, but the negotiations bog down especially on the question of Poland's role. The British and French give their OK to the possible movement of Soviet troops through Poland in a "protector" role in the case of German-Polish war. But Poland absolutely refuses any such deal. It is clear that time is running out, especially as Stalin—distrustful, with reason, of the Western Powers, and having given a series of diplomatic "hints" for months previous—begins to eye Hitler favorably, and vice-versa. Stalin would like to see a war of attrition between Germany and the West without his involvement, so that he could move in and pick up the pieces after the combattants had bled themselves dry. Hitler would like to have his hands freed in the East, after a defeat of Poland, by an accomodation with Stalin. Ideally, he hopes that such an accomodation will shock the Western Powers into thinking twice about their apparent plans for what would then amount to a one-front Western war with Germany. In this way Hitler hopes to prevent a general European war.

Roosevelt and the Attempt at an Anglo-French-Soviet Alliance

American Ambassador Bullitt at Paris was not enthusiastic about the Anglo-French attempt to conclude an alliance with the Soviet Union. He was inclined to agree with the hostile Polish attitude toward Russia. Bullitt had been American Ambassador at Moscow from 1933 to 1936, and he had few illusions about the Soviet Union. He suggested in his final report from Moscow on April 20, 1936, that the Russian standard of living was possibly lower than that of any other country in the world. He reported that the Bulgarian Comintern leader, Dimitrov, had admitted that Soviet popular front and collective security tactics were aimed at undermining the foreign capitalist systems. He insisted that relations of sincere friendship between the Soviet Union and the United States were an impossibility. He admitted that a conflict between Germany and France would expose Europe to the danger of Communist domination. He believed that it was worth taking this risk in order to destroy Germany, but he was fully aware of the danger involved.

President Roosevelt was aware that economic and social conditions in Germany were far superior to those in the Soviet Union. Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, who succeeded Bullitt at Moscow, reported to Roosevelt on April 1, 1938, that the terror in Russia was "a horrifying fact." Davies also complained about the gigan-

tic Soviet expenditures on armaments, and he reported that about 25% of the total Soviet national income in 1937 was spent on defense, compared to 10% in Germany. Davies reported that Stalin, in a letter to *Pravda* on February 14, 1938, had confirmed his intention to spread the Communist system throughout the world. Stalin promised that the Soviet Government would work with foreign Communists to achieve this goal. He concluded his letter by stating: "I wish very much . . . that there were no longer on earth such unpleasant things as a capitalistic environment, the danger of a military attack, the danger of the restoration of capitalism, and so on." Davies mentioned that General Ernst Koestring, the veteran German military attache in the Soviet Union, continued to hold a high opinion of the Red Army despite the gigantic purges of 1937 in the Russian military services. Davies concluded that the Soviet Union could best be described as "a terrible tyranny." The presentation of these reports did not prompt President Roosevelt to withdraw the statement he had made in his major address at Chicago on October 6, 1937, that the Soviet Union was one of the peace-loving nations of the world. Roosevelt was fully aware of the danger from Communism, but he believed that this consideration was unimportant compared to his preferred objective of destroying National Socialist Germany.

Premier Daladier of France would have been furious had he known that Kennard was sabotaging British pressure on Poland with the argument that American sensibilities had to be taken into account. He told American Ambassador Bullitt at Paris on August 18th that he was shocked and angered by the "violence" with which Lukasiewicz and Beck had rejected Soviet aid to Poland. Daladier claimed that it would be easy to internationalize Soviet aid to the Poles by sending two French and one British divisions to Poland by way of Russia. Daladier repeated to Bullitt three times with increasing emphasis that he would not send a single French peasant to give his life for Poland if the Poles rejected Russian aid.

Bullitt was alarmed by this revelation of what he considered a violently anti-Polish reaction on the part of Daladier. He had applied pressure for months on Daladier and Alexis Leger, the Secretary-General at the French Foreign Office, in the hope that they would distance themselves from the peace policy of Georges Bonnet and repudiate that policy. He had visited London in May 1939 to coordinate his strategy with the efforts of Sir Robert Vansittart. The Diplomatic Adviser to His Majesty's Government considered relations with France to be his own special province, and he hoped to support the Halifax war policy by securing French participation in any war against Germany. Vansittart assured Bullitt that Alexis Leger was his "intimate friend," and

that Leger could be relied upon to support the efforts of Halifax and Roosevelt to involve France in war with Germany.

Bullitt, Vansittart, and Leger feared that Sir Eric Phipps, the British Ambassador to France and brother-in-law of Vansittart, shared the negative attitude of Prime Minister Chamberlain toward an alliance between the Western Powers and Russia. Bullitt had begun to dislike Bonnet, and he reported to President Roosevelt without any regard for accuracy: "in point of fact both Bonnet and Sir Eric Phipps were opposed to bringing the Soviet Union into close cooperation with France and England." Bullitt also feared that Prime Minister Chamberlain might attempt to challenge the policy of Halifax and restore his own control over the conduct of British policy. American Ambassador Kennedy had reported from London on July 20, 1939, that Chamberlain was "sick and disgusted with Russians." The British Prime Minister believed that Hitler would welcome any tangible opportunity for a peaceful settlement. Chamberlain knew that Hitler was not bluffing and that he might gamble on a war, but he told Kennedy that Hitler "is highly intelligent and therefore would not be prepared to wage a world war."

President Roosevelt had intervened directly in the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the Western Powers on August 4, 1939. Lawrence Steinhardt, who had succeeded Davies as American Ambassador to Russia, was instructed by confidential letter to tell Molotov that the interests of the United States and the Soviet Union were identical in promoting the defeat of Italy and Germany in a European war. President Roosevelt urged the Soviet Union to conclude a military alliance with Great Britain and France, and he intimated that the United States would ultimately join this coalition of Powers. The American Ambassador was informed that President Roosevelt had told Soviet Ambassador Konstantin Umansky, before the latter departed for Russia on leave, that the United States hoped to achieve a position of solidarity with the Soviet Union against Germany and Italy.

The Russians were pleased with the Roosevelt message because it strengthened their position in negotiations with both the Western Powers and Germany, and the support of Roosevelt made it easier for them to gain consent for their ambitious program of expansion in Finland, Poland, Rumania, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Russians had no desire to conceal from the foreign Powers the contents of the confidential Roosevelt message. The news of the message appeared in the *Voelkischer Beobachter* at Berlin on August 11, 1939, and its contents were published by the *Ilustrowany Kurjer* at Krakow on August 13, 1939. Steinhardt knew that Umansky had been informed of the contents of the Roosevelt message before leaving the United

States. The letter with the message was sent by way of Bullitt at Paris, and Steinhardt did not receive it until August 15, 1939. He concluded that Molotov had instructed Umansky to reveal the contents of the letter before it reached Russia, and that Molotov had proceeded to permit the news of the letter to reach the foreign Powers before he had actually received it himself.

Steinhardt presented the Roosevelt letter to Molotov on August 16, 1939 and the two diplomats proceeded to discuss its contents. Roosevelt, in writing the letter, had hoped to influence Russian policy in favor of the Western Powers, but it is not surprising that he failed completely in this effort, and that Molotov used the message for his own purposes. Molotov told Steinhardt that the British and French military missions had come to Russia to discuss military collaboration in terms which the Soviet Foreign Commissar characterized as "vague generalities." Molotov added that these missions were unable to contend with the specific points which Russia had raised.

Steinhardt reported to President Roosevelt on August 16th that he was personally convinced that the Soviet Union would seek to avoid participation in the early phase of a European conflict. This annoyed President Roosevelt, who seemingly would have led the United States into a European conflict on the first day of war had American public opinion and the American Congress permitted such a policy. The American President was perturbed to learn, a few days later, that Alexis Leger at the French Foreign Office was not the unconditional advocate of war-at-any-price which Bullitt had claimed. Leger revealed his opinion that it would be exceedingly unwise for Great Britain and France to attack Germany without military support from the Soviet Union. This seemed to indicate that there would be virtually no support for a war policy in France if the negotiations at Moscow failed. Roosevelt also learned that Premier Daladier was continuing to denounce the "criminal folly" of the Poles. President Roosevelt knew that Halifax would abandon his project for war against Germany if he was unable to gain the military support of either the Soviet Union or France. The possibility that the peace might be saved was perturbing to the American President who hoped to utilize a European war to achieve his dream for the perpetuation of his tenure and the increase of his personal prestige and glory.

By August 11th, even as negotiations with the British and French are still in progress, Stalin decides to exercise the option with Germany. A definite indication is sent to Berlin the next day. Russian Foreign Minister Molotov and German Ambassador Schulenberg engage in preliminary talks. With the final failure of the British and French missions, the way is open for a German-

Soviet agreement. On August 23rd, after the settling of a commercial treaty, Ribbentrop flies to Moscow; that night a German-Soviet nonaggression pact is signed and announced to the world. It is a desperate, quickly-snatched triumph for Hitler, whose satisfaction at his position is marred only by the knowledge that Count Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, had backed Italy down and out of the "united front" with Germany in the face of an evident Anglo-French determination to go to war over Danzig.

The German-Soviet Pact

Hitler hoped to recover the diplomatic initiative through his Kremlin pact of August 23, 1939. The effort launched by Halifax on March 17, 1939, to build a formidable British alliance front in Eastern Europe had failed. Hitler also hoped that Great Britain and France would react to this situation by withdrawing their support from Poland. He knew that his pact with Russia placed him in a strong position to resume negotiations with the Western Powers. His recent success was too sensational to permit new negotiation efforts to be readily confused with weakness. The British Government gave Hitler an excellent opening for his new diplomatic campaign by commissioning Chamberlain to write to him. The British leaders, of course, did not intend to embark on major negotiations, but Hitler had other plans. The presentation of the Chamberlain letter by Henderson on August 23, 1939, was the signal for a major German diplomatic offensive in Great Britain.

The situation would have been relatively simple for Hitler by August 23, 1939, had it not been for the unpardonable indiscretion of Ciano and the incredible conduct of General Gamelin. The statement of Ciano on August 18th that Italy would not support Germany cushioned Halifax from the impact of the German treaty with Russia, and it gave General Gamelin an excuse to rationalize the unfavorable French military situation, which had been created by the Russian agreement with Germany. The action of Ciano was especially unwarranted because the Italian Foreign Minister knew that Hitler hoped to create the maximum effect of surprise with his Russian pact. Ciano knew that his own pledge to the British would greatly reduce the impact of Hitler's diplomacy. It was easy to argue in London that the position of Hitler would be insecure if the Italians refused to be loyal to their engagements with him. Italian loyalty to Hitler and a clear decision from France against war on behalf of the Poles would surely have pulled the teeth from the Halifax campaign to launch a preventive war against Germany. The absence of these contingencies made it exceedingly difficult for Hitler to capitalize on his Russian success in negotiations with the British leaders. He was not fully

aware of this situation on August 23rd. He knew nothing of the Italian pledge to the British on August 18th, or of the crucial debate in the meeting of the French Defense Council. He failed to appreciate the adamanat determination of Halifax for war. He knew that British Ambassador Henderson was opposed to war, and he hoped that the views of the British diplomat at Berlin were shared to some extent by his master at London. Hitler was more optimistic than the facts warranted, but this was mainly because he was not fully aware of the existing situation.

The Russians too were unduly optimistic about their prospects on August 23, 1939. They overestimated the military power of France, and they expected a hopeless military stalemate on the Franco-German front reminiscent of World War I. Stalin hoped to expand his position in Eastern Europe, and to intervene militarily against Germany in the latter phase of a European war, when both Germany and the Western Powers were exhausted. There was one notably great difference in the attitudes of Stalin and Hitler. The Soviet Dictator, like Halifax and Roosevelt, was hoping for the outbreak of a general European war. Hitler considered that a European war would be a great evil, and he was anxious to prevent it. It is ironical to anticipate that the leaders of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States ultimately joined together in true Orwellian fashion, at Nuremberg in 1945-1946, to condemn the German leaders for deliberately seeking, as "aggressors," to destroy the peace of the world.

In July, Hitler had launched a private program for peace at the suggestion of Reichsmarshall Goering. Goering's friend Birger Dahlerus, a Swedish engineer with many contacts in both Britain and Germany, arranged unofficial meetings throughout July and August between Germans and British supporters of the Chamberlain government. Other private contacts between the Germans and the British developed. Potentially good news about the attitude of influential Britons—their desire to see peace between Britain and Germany maintained—came from these conferences, including a report stating that William S. Ropp, who had been selected to head the British Air Ministry intelligence service division for Germany in wartime, claimed that there was lively opposition to war with Germany in the British Air Ministry. Ropp had further suggested that a British-French declaration of war on Germany need not be taken seriously, because it would be possible to conclude peace after the completion of the Polish phase of hostilities. Goering, ever suspicious, suspects the Ropp remarks may be a British ploy, designed to lure Hitler into gambling in Poland. But Alfred Rosenberg, head of the Foreign Policy office of the National Socialist Party, believes the sentiments may well be

genuine and accurate. His report on the matter is forwarded to the German Foreign Office and to Hitler.

Hitler Hopes for Peace—Despite Roosevelt

The German Foreign Office also received a confidential report on August 16, 1939, from Paul Legrenier, a French journalist who was sincerely friendly toward Germany. Legrenier insisted that Great Britain and France would not go to war against Germany in a conflict between Germany and Poland arising from trouble at Danzig. He was basing his report on the determination of French Foreign Minister Bonnet not to fight for Polish interests at Danzig, and on the obvious fact that Great Britain would not attack Germany without French support. Joseph Barnes, the Berlin correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*, estimated to the German diplomats on the same day that there was still at least a 50-50 chance that Great Britain and France would not attack Germany. Barnes added that he was basing his estimate on the assumption that Germany would make a great effort to avoid needless provocation of Great Britain and France. The reports of Ropp, Legrenier, and Barnes were received by Hitler on August 16, 1939, before the announcement of the Russo-German Pact. Hitler was convinced that the conclusion of the Pact with Russia would increase the chances for peace. It is not astonishing under these circumstances that he was more optimistic than Goering or Mussolini about the possibilities of avoiding an Anglo-German war.

The German Foreign Office was under no illusion about the official policy of President Roosevelt in the current crisis. They knew that his policy was based on the twin assumptions that there should and would be a general European war. There was also reason to believe that some of the American diplomats in Berlin did not share this attitude. British Ambassador Henderson informed the Germans that American Charge d'Affaires Kirk was constantly prodding him to insist that Great Britain would fight rather than retreat, but there was ample evidence that Kirk hoped a show of British firmness would prompt Hitler to make new proposals for a settlement. The Germans also knew that Kirk had severely reprimanded Louis P. Lochner, the American journalist, for questioning the determination of Germany to go to war. Lochner was following the tactics of the Polish journalists by claiming that Hitler was bluffing, because he knew that these tactics would encourage German defiance and make war more likely. It was obvious that Kirk would not have intervened with Lochner on his own initiative had he personally favored war, and the German diplomats were pleased to learn that Kirk had denounced his warmongering.

The Roosevelt Messages to Germany and Poland

President Roosevelt sent insincere peace messages to Germany and Poland at 9:00 p.m. on August 24, 1939. He ignored in his message to Germany the rebuff he had received from Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on April 28th by claiming that "to the message which I sent you last April I have received no reply." He proposed a settlement between Germany and Poland by direct negotiation, arbitration, or mediation. He was treading on difficult ground, because Poland, whom he favored, rather than Germany, whom he opposed, blocked the resumption of negotiations. The messages from President Roosevelt forced President Moscicki of Poland to pay lip service to negotiation, although the Polish Government did not desire to resume contact with the Germans. The reply of President Moscicki was a definite pledge to President Roosevelt that Poland would negotiate, although the Poles actually had no intention of doing so.

President Roosevelt informed Hitler that "it is understood, of course, that upon resort to any one of the alternatives I suggest, each nation will agree to accord complete respect to the independence and territorial integrity of the other." President Roosevelt imagined that this arrangement would preclude in advance any tangible Polish concessions to Germany, but its terms were entirely consistent with the Hitler offer of October 1938 which the Poles had rejected. The original German proposals were actually based upon the respect of the independence and territorial integrity of Poland. This had not prevented the Poles from rejecting them and from ordering the partial mobilization of the Polish armed forces against Germany. Hitler had revealed to the world the inaccuracies and fallacies in the Roosevelt proposals of April 15, 1939, to Germany and Italy, but President Roosevelt rarely accepted criticism. He blandly concluded his message to Hitler with the statement that the United States was prepared to contribute to peace "in the form set forth in my messages of April 14 (advance release of the messages to the American press on that date)." The Roosevelt messages to Germany and Poland were made public at Washington, D.C., at 10:00 p.m. on August 24, 1939. The message to Hitler was not submitted to the German Foreign Office by American Charge d'Affaires Kirk until 9:00 a.m. on August 25th. Hitler decided to defer his reply to President Roosevelt for several days. He was intent, because of the importance of German-American relations, upon preparing a carefully cogent and courteous exposition of the German position for the benefit of the American President.

German Ambassador Mackensen had a satisfactory conversation with Mussolini about the Russo-German treaty early on August 25, 1939. The Italian leader warmly assured Mackensen that he approved of this Pact, and he recalled that he had

suggested this himself the previous Spring. Mussolini told Mackensen that he was whole-heartedly in accord with Germany's position in the Polish question. The Italian leader described the worsening of German-Polish relations as "so acute that an armed conflict can no longer be avoided." He was convinced that the Polish mentality was "no longer responsive to reasonable suggestions, no matter from which side they might come."

Mackensen was immensely impressed by the attitude displayed by Mussolini in the absence of Ciano or [Italian Ambassador to Germany] Attolico. Mussolini claimed that the Poles should have responded to Hitler's original offer by accepting the German annexation of Danzig as an indication that they were sincere in their desire to come to a general agreement with Germany. Mussolini was convinced that "a general conference might have followed" which would have "assured European peace for fifteen to twenty years, as is desired by all." The attitude of the Italian leader on the morning of August 25th was everything which Hitler could have desired, and the German leader concluded that it would be possible to rely on Mussolini's full support. He expected a favorable statement from Italy later in the day in response to the earlier initiative of Ribbentrop.

Mussolini and Ciano had renewed their discussion about a general peace conference with [British Ambassador to Italy] Sir Percy Loraine after the announcement of the Russo-German pact. Loraine reported to Halifax on August 23rd that Mussolini wanted peace, and that he would like to mediate in the German-Polish dispute. Mussolini assured Loraine that Hitler would not accept the terms of a general settlement unless they included the German annexation of Danzig. Loraine reported that the Italians were concentrating on an attempt to gain a British concession on this one decisive point. Loraine informed Halifax that both Mussolini and Ciano were convinced that a successful diplomatic conference was the only hope for a solution of the current difficulties.

American Ambassador William C. Bullitt was advising both Halifax and the French leaders to maintain their military missions in Moscow, and to continue their efforts to detach Italy from Germany. Halifax recognized that the situation in Russia was untenable by this time. The Anglo-French teams had no choice other than to leave Russia empty-handed. Molotov granted an audience to French Ambassador Naggiar on August 25th, immediately after the British and French military men departed from the Russian capital. The Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs took pleasure in announcing to the West that the Poles were exclusively responsible for the failure of Anglo-French negotiations with the Russians for a mutual assistance pact. This announcement confirmed suspicions which French Foreign Minister

Bonnet had entertained for many days, and he was inclined for this reason to accept the Russian explanation at face value. Bonnet continued to be furious with the Poles. They had allowed Lipski to engage in an inconclusive conversation with Marshal Goering the previous day, but they had haughtily rejected his suggestion for Franco-Polish consultation on Danzig. The French Foreign Minister was resolved to retaliate by seizing the first opportunity of releasing France from her military obligations to Poland.

Halifax was no longer concerned about Russia, and he did not share the desire of Bonnet to repress Polish excesses at Danzig. He was primarily interested in creating the impression everywhere in the world that the Russo-German pact had not caused him to reconsider his policy toward Germany. Halifax dispatched uniform instructions to British diplomatic missions in all countries on August 24th. He urged them to accept the superhuman task of correcting the impression that the pact had been a blow to the "peace front" headed by England and France. He also claimed that the pact "had produced no effect" on the British Cabinet. He exhorted his diplomats that the British course was straight ahead under the slogan of "preventing the domination of Europe by Germany." Halifax did not explain how a revived German nation of eighty million German citizens could fail to be the leading continental power. After all, it had been said after 1871 that the Germany of Bismarck, with her forty million inhabitants, dominated Europe. The policy of Halifax was calculated to destroy Germany rather than to permit that normal growth and development which for centuries had been considered the natural right of every nation. It was a policy which led to the destruction of a friendly Germany and to the domination of Europe by a hostile Union pledged to overthrow the capitalist system in Great Britain.

Percy Loraine in Rome exposed himself to ridicule in an effort to meet the diplomatic requirements of Halifax. He informed Ciano on August 24 that the Russo-German pact had given him "the first hearty laugh he had had for some weeks." The same man had previously informed the Italian leaders that a pact of mutual assistance with Russia was a necessary feature of the British program. The Italians could be pardoned for suspecting that his "hearty laugh" closely resembled an hysterical scream, because they had never heard him laugh. Loraine soon learned that Halifax was under heavy pressure at home on August 24th to modify the uncompromising British stand at Danzig. The British Foreign Secretary confided to Loraine, despite his earlier circular instructions, that Great Britain might ultimately consider the return of Danzig to Germany as part of an international

settlement. Loraine was bewildered by this information, and he wondered if Halifax intended after all to encourage Mussolini to take the initiative for a conference, which again might resolve British difficulties. There had been no similar suggestion from Halifax during the entire period from the British guarantee to Poland of March 31st to the conclusion of the Russo-German pact. Unfortunately, the momentary weakening of Halifax's rigid stand at Danzig was of short duration, and he soon concluded that he could maintain his original position against the mounting opposition at home. Gilbert and Gott, in *The Appeasers*, attempt to present this incident as a sustained effort on the part of Halifax to come to terms with Germany at Danzig. Unfortunately, this was not the case.

The Polish Pledge to Roosevelt

President Roosevelt received the text of President Moscicki's message on August 25, 1939, and forwarded it to Hitler. Roosevelt emphasized to Hitler that he had a binding promise from Moscicki that Poland would engage in direct negotiations with Germany. The American President added that "all the world prays that Germany, too, will accept." Hitler knew that the message from President Roosevelt was merely a propaganda gesture to discredit Germany, and he was sufficiently shrewd to recognize that a promise made by Poland to the United States was not worth the paper on which it was written. The Poles knew that Roosevelt would support any Polish move to increase the prospect of conflict with Germany and that the American President would not react unfavorably if they refused to honor a pledge to negotiate with Germany. Hitler also knew this, and hence he concentrated on his effort to convince the British that the Poles should negotiate rather than seek to exploit the meaningless Polish response to President Roosevelt.

Beck assured American Ambassador Biddle shortly before midnight on August 25, 1939, that war between Germany and Poland was inevitable. He claimed that Poland had an adequate legal basis for a declaration of war against Germany, in case the Germans failed to take the initiative against Poland within the next few days. Beck denied that there was any truth in the Bielitz massacre, which had been confirmed by neutral sources. He claimed instead that a Polish soldier had been killed by the Germans on August 16, 1939, and that the Germans had proceeded to cut open the stomach of the corpse and to conceal in it the skull of a baby. This story was widely repeated by Polish spokesmen in the days and years which followed, although no attempt was ever made to document the incident. They failed to realize that this type of savagery was based upon certain primi-

tive voodoo-like superstitions in Eastern Europe which were not shared by the Germans. It would have been an unique historical event had modern Poland elected to base a declaration of war on this fantastic charge. American Ambassador Biddle was much impressed by the aggressive attitude of Beck. He predicted to President Roosevelt that Poland would present a series of *ultimata* to Germany if Hitler backed down in the Danzig dispute.

Beck was impressed by a public German announcement on August 25, 1939, that the Tannenberg and Nuremberg conclaves had been cancelled. The cancellation announcement, and the impressive number of incidents between the Germans and Poles on the following day, convinced the Polish Foreign Minister that a German attack would come at any moment. He did not conclude until August 27th that Hitler, after all, had taken no decisive military measures. French Ambassador Noel claimed that Beck was a very sick man at this time. The French diplomat charged that he was suffering from aggravated fatigue, tuberculosis, and an excessive addiction to stimulants. The Polish Foreign Minister ultimately died of tuberculosis in Rumania in 1944, after the British authorities had denied him permission to come to England. The French Ambassador, who detested Beck, delighted in conveying the impression that the Polish Foreign Minister was both morally and physically decadent.

German troops at the Slovak-Polish frontier had begun their advance on the morning of August 26, 1939, before countermanding orders reached them, and they crossed into Poland at Jablonka Pass. Fortunately, the Poles were not holding a position there, and an engagement was avoided when the Germans speedily retreated a considerable distance across the frontier and into Slovakia. The Poles engaged German patrols in nearly a dozen skirmishes in the Dzialdowo region directly north of Warsaw and across the East Prussian frontier. The engagements ended when the German units were suddenly withdrawn. It was significant that these serious incidents occurred on two of the most crucial sectors of the German operational plan. A massacre of minority Germans in the Lodz area and constant violations of the German frontier from the Polish side tended to deflect attention from these incidents. A Polish warship on August 26, 1939, fired at a German civilian transport airplane on which State Secretary Wilhelm Stuckardt of the Ministry of Interior was returning from Danzig. Stuckardt and the Danzig leaders had discussed the legal problems involved in the projected return of Danzig to the Reich.

Hitler's reversal of military orders naturally created perplexity in the German Army. One of the German Generals was dispatched to the Wilhelmstrasse on the night of August 25, 1939, to

inquire indignantly why the soldiers had been sent out if it was intended to settle differences with Poland by diplomatic means. The German Foreign Office had no ready answer with which to meet this embarrassing question.

In Berlin, British Ambassador Henderson, a sincere advocate of a British-German understanding who privately sympathizes with Germany in the Polish question, works tirelessly for peace in the difficult position of having to officially represent Halifax's war policy. He tries to persuade Halifax of the reality of the German minority's sufferings in Poland. He stresses that unless Poland finally negotiates with Germany there will undoubtedly be war. He remarks that from the beginning "the Poles were utterly foolish and unwise."

Roosevelt Hopes for War and Strives to Coordinate Policy

Phipps reported from Paris that Bullitt had received new instructions from President Roosevelt designed to facilitate a closer coordination of British and American policy against Germany. The American President suggested that everything possible should be done by propaganda to bring down the German regime in revolutionary chaos. Roosevelt believed that wireless propaganda should be broadcast to Germany around the clock. He expected that it would produce a great effect to argue in advance that Hitler would be solely responsible for any war. He hoped that the pacific desires of the German people might be exploited to undermine the loyalty of Germans toward their government after the outbreak of war.

Henderson continued to do what he could at Berlin to preserve peace. He contacted Polish Ambassador Lipski again on August 25th and urged him to discuss the problem of the German minority in Poland with the German Government. Henderson reported to Halifax that Italian Ambassador Attolico was horrified at the prospect of war. Attolico had declared with indignation that warmongers such as Anthony Eden should be hanged. Henderson avoided criticizing Attolico's statement about Eden in any way. Eden, to be sure, had worked with Churchill to sabotage appeasement, but the chief role in the scuttling of the appeasement policy had been played by Halifax, the man to whom Henderson addressed his report.

Sir Ronald Lindsay, the British Ambassador to the United States, addressed a series of final reports to Halifax prior to his return to England and his replacement by Lord Lothian. Lindsay indicated that Roosevelt was delighted at the prospect of a new World War. The American President had damaged his prospects in May 1939 with his unsuccessful attempt to pull the teeth from

the American neutrality laws, but he assured Lindsay that he would succeed in emasculating this legislation after the outbreak of war. He admitted that he would be forced to delay a new effort to do so "until war broke out." The American President also promised that he would not actually abide by the neutrality laws if he was compelled to invoke them. He would frustrate the purpose of the laws by delaying a proclamation of neutrality for at least five days after the outbreak of war. He would see that war material in the interim was rushed to the British in Canada in enormous quantities. Lindsay reported with his usual excessive moderation that there "was every indication in his language that the American authorities would be anxious to cheat in favor of His Majesty's Government."

Roosevelt also promised Lindsay that he would delay German ships under false pretenses in a feigned search for arms, so that they could be easily seized by the British under circumstances which would be arranged with exactitude between the American and British authorities. The British Ambassador was personally perturbed that the President of one of the important countries could be gay and joyful about a tragedy which seemed so destructive of the hopes of all mankind. He reported that Roosevelt "spoke in a tone of almost impish glee and though I may be wrong the whole business gave me the impression of resembling a school-boy prank." It was an American and world tragedy to have at this important juncture a President whose emotions and ideas could be rated by a friendly Ambassador as childish.

Halifax was inclined to regard the attitude of the American President as a product of one of the most successful British efforts in colonial propaganda. The American President, who was an enthusiastic militarist, had accepted the idea of World War II as his best escape from the economic depression in the United States. The British Foreign Secretary had studied the fantastic Lochner report about the alleged remarks of Hitler to his military men on the Obersalzberg on August 22nd. He wired Loraine in Rome on August 26th that recent information from Berlin indicated that Hitler had some kind of Polish partition in mind. His purpose was to convey to Mussolini the idea that the German leader was too extreme in his plans, at the expense of the Poles, to be amenable to a reasonable settlement of German-Polish difficulties. Halifax hoped in this way to discourage Mussolini's ideas for a diplomatic conference.

Thomsen's View of Roosevelt

State Secretary Weizsaecker had invited American Charge d'Affaires Kirk to call at the German Foreign Office on the evening of August 26th. Weizsaecker conveyed Hitler's acknowl-

edgment of the two recent messages from President Roosevelt, and Kirk expressed his pleasure at this act of courtesy. Weizsaecker advised Kirk that it would be more timely to present warnings in Warsaw than at Berlin. German Charge d'Affaires Thomsen reminded Hitler on August 28th that Roosevelt would do everything he could to encompass the downfall of Germany. He predicted that Roosevelt would employ ruthless tactics to force active American participation in a European war despite opposition from American public opinion. Thomsen was convinced that American raw materials and machines would be made available to Great Britain and France immediately after the outbreak of war, and that this measure would be popular because it would aid in overcoming the extensive unemployment. Thomsen concluded that the existing American neutrality legislation would be either abrogated or circumvented.

On August 25th, the British guarantee to Poland becomes a formal military alliance. Hitler appeals to Britain and France not to make a German-Polish dispute the cause of general European war. He offers a remarkable alliance to Britain in which German troops would guarantee the British empire around the world. The offer is brushed aside. Henderson continues his attempt to save the situation at Berlin; he urges Lipski to enter into discussions with the Germans, to no avail. Henderson's exertions are joined by those of Dahlerus, by now communicating directly between Hitler and Chamberlain and Halifax. France strongly urges Poland to negotiate with Germany. Britain does not. Poland calls up more reservists to active service. On August 29th, Hitler presents a moderate 16-point basis for direct negotiations with Poland. Poland does not respond. Beck refuses to go to Berlin to take part in discussions. On August 31st, Lipski, minus plenipotentiary powers, meets with Hitler but refuses to consider one final German proposal.

Chamberlain and Halifax

No one in the position of the British Ambassador could be blamed for desisting from further efforts to prevent war, but Henderson never stopped trying. It is this fact, combined with his unquestionable British patriotism and his determination to stand by his own country through thick and thin, regardless of the dreadful blunders of the British leaders, that make his mission to Berlin a study in courage. He tried every possible tactic to persuade Chamberlain to express his own views, and to encourage the British Prime Minister to resume leadership at the British Foreign Office before it was too late. He made a special effort to convince the British leaders that he had always been firm with

Hitler, and he recalled that he had bombarded Hitler with arguments and answers in the conversation of August 28th, which had apparently turned out very favorably for Great Britain.

Halifax continued to advise Chamberlain to ignore the complaints of Henderson and others about the attitude and policies of Poland. He received a very useful letter from Count Raczynski on August 30th. The Polish Government in this letter solemnly swore that no persecution of the German minority was taking place in Poland. The American journalist, W.L. White, later recalled that there was no doubt among well-informed persons by this time that horrible atrocities were being inflicted every day on the Germans of Poland. The pledge from Raczynski had about as much validity as the civil liberties guaranteed by the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union.

Chamberlain complained to American Ambassador Kennedy after the outbreak of World War II "that America and the world Jews had forced England into the war." Kennedy himself was convinced that "neither the French nor the British would have made Poland a cause of war if it had not been for the constant needling from Washington." Kennedy in 1939 was subjected to constant pressure from the American Ambassador at Paris, and he placed primary emphasis on "Bullitt's urging on Roosevelt in the summer of 1939 that the Germans must be faced down about Poland." Kennedy was instructed by President Roosevelt on the telephone "to put some iron up Chamberlain's backside," a gratuitous instruction because Chamberlain had abdicated control over British policy to Lord Halifax in October 1938. Kennedy, Bullitt, and Roosevelt never succeeded in understanding this situation. They were neither well-informed, nor astute about discovering facts for themselves, and Halifax never chose to confide in them. The subsequent sting of conscience which caused Chamberlain to complain to Kennedy about America and the Jews was an attempt to shift the blame rather than a full confession. He was merely saying in different words that he and his friends might have found the courage to challenge Halifax had not the latter enjoyed the support of President Roosevelt. This was undoubtedly a defensive rationalization, because none of them ever displayed the slightest inclination to oppose Halifax. Furthermore, Halifax had decided upon a policy of war with Germany long before the German occupation of Prague, and before Roosevelt attempted to exert any considerable bellicose pressure on the British leaders. Halifax had stirred Roosevelt against the Germans before Hitler went to Prague, rather than the other way around. Roosevelt was a novice in international affairs compared to Halifax, and it was inconceivable that he could exert a decisive influence on the British Foreign Secretary.

Halifax had considered an Anglo-German war inevitable ever since 1936, and he never wavered in his campaign to destroy Germany, from October 1938, when he assumed personal control over British policy, to the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. He was more than a match for Chamberlain, the Unitarian business leader from the Midlands, or for any of his soft-spoken friends. He had refrained from wresting control over foreign policy from Chamberlain until the British leader returned from Munich to face the hostile critics within his own Conservative Party. He had never seriously criticized Chamberlain's conduct of policy until he was in a position to dominate it himself. Halifax would have been amused to hear Winston Churchill telling his friends in August 1939 that he feared the British Government "would run out over Poland." This was the wrong way to put it. Halifax was primarily worried by the possibility that France would run out over Poland. This was the only event which would prompt him to abandon his own policy of war against Germany.

On the morning of September 1st, German troops attack Poland. Hitler announces the invasion before the Reichstag, stating that the brutal suppression of the ethnic German minority and the lack of freedom and self-determination for Danzig necessitated military action. Mussolini makes last-minute pleas for a grand peace conference dealing with all causes of European conflict, to meet on September 5th, on the precondition that Danzig is returned to Germany in advance. Hitler and, initially, France, are agreeable. Britain is not, and goads France into joining with Britain in insisting on a precondition that fighting must stop in Poland. The conference plan fails. On the night of September 2nd, British ministers led by Halifax virtually demand of Chamberlain that an ultimatum be issued to Germany. It is presented the next morning, demanding not only that the fighting cease but that all German troops withdraw from Poland. With the expiration of the ultimatum at 11 a.m., Britain declares war on Germany. A French ultimatum follows, somewhat reluctantly. With its expiration at 5 p.m., France declares war on Germany. World War II begins.

Halifax and Roosevelt

It was clever of Halifax to claim that further intimate Anglo-German conversations would displease President Roosevelt. Chamberlain had been severely criticized for failing to respond favorably to an impractical proposal from Roosevelt, in January 1938, for a grandiose diplomatic conference, which would not only have failed to commit the United States to the British imperialistic program, but undoubtedly would have weakened the effort of Chamberlain to increase British influence in Italy. Lord

Lothian had succeeded Sir Ronald Lindsay as British Ambassador to the United States. Lothian, like Henderson at Berlin, favored a peaceful understanding with Germany, but he was a disciplined diplomat who subordinated his own personal views to the requirements of Halifax's war policy. The new British Ambassador was destined to play a more active role behind the scenes of American politics than any previous British diplomat. Lothian confirmed Lindsay's judgment that there was "nothing neutral" about Roosevelt's attitude. The American President insisted that "the most serious danger from the standpoint of American public opinion would be if it formed the conclusion that Herr Hitler was entangling the British Government in negotiations leading to pressure on Poland by England and France to abandon vital interests." It was obvious to Lothian that Roosevelt wanted war in Europe.

The American President knew that a diplomatic settlement of the European crisis would extinguish his own plans for American military aggression in Europe. Lord Lothian assured Halifax that the partisanship of Roosevelt extended to the minute details. Roosevelt intended to urge the belligerents at the outbreak of the expected war not to bombard civilians, because he hoped in this way to protect Warsaw, one of the Allied capitals. Lothian knew that Roosevelt would never object to a later effort by Great Britain to massacre the civilian population of Germany by means of mass bombing attacks. Roosevelt confided to Lothian that his primary objective at the moment was to evade American neutrality legislation after the outbreak of war. He was intent on renewing the struggle in the American Congress to remove the legal embargo on war material. He promised that he would refuse to admit from the very start of hostilities that aluminum sheets for airplanes were "aeroplane parts" or that airplane engine blocks had anything to do with airplanes.

Lothian confirmed the report of his predecessor that Roosevelt was delighted at the prospect of a new World War. This warlike attitude of Roosevelt was exploited by Halifax in adducing artificial arguments for closing the door on further negotiations with Hitler. There was actually no reason to fear that President Roosevelt would be in a position to cause trouble for Great Britain in the event of a negotiated settlement in Europe. The American President did not have the support of Congress or public opinion for his aggressive foreign policy, and he was nearing the end of his final presidential term, final according to the sacrosanct political tradition established by George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. It was obvious that he would need a crisis of the greatest dimensions, such as a big war in Europe, to campaign successfully for further terms of office. It would have been easy

For space reasons the 98 footnotes with which Professor Hoggan supports his case in this article are omitted from this issue of The JHR. They appear in the German edition of The Forced War (Der erzwungene Krieg: Die Ursachen und Urheber des 2. Weltkriegs [Tuebingen: Grabert Verlag]), the latest (12th) revised edition of which contains some substantial supplementations, and will of course appear in the forthcoming English edition.

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TYLER KENT served in the American State Department foreign service from 1934 to 1940, first at Moscow and then at London. While working as a code clerk at the London embassy, he began to abstract and make copies for his own use of documents which he believed indicated that President Roosevelt was lying to the American people and Congress about commitments to Britain. He was arrested by Scotland Yard in May 1940, and his diplomatic immunity was waived by Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy. Charged with violating Britain's Official Secrets Act, he was convicted in a secret trial and remained in British confinement until November 1945. Since the war he has been a businessman and publisher. He currently resides in Texas, and is working on an autobiography.

DAVID L. HOGGAN received his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1948. His academic career has included teaching posts at the University of California at Berkeley, San Francisco State College, and the *Amerika Institut* of the University of Munich. In 1964 he was awarded the Leopold von Ranke Prize for historical scholarship by the Society for the Promotion of Historical Research, of West Germany. His book on the origins of World War II, *Der erzwungene Krieg*, was based on his doctoral dissertation dealing with German-Polish relations. First published in 1961, it has been kept continually in print in revised, updated editions. Dr. Hoggan's other books include: *Frankreichs Widerstand gegen den Zweiten Weltkrieg, Der unnoetige Krieg: Deutsche Aussenpolitik 1939-1945, The Myth of the New History,* and *Das blinde Jahrhundert Teil I: Amerika - Das messianische Urteil.* In the 1960s he founded the Hoggan Research Institute, at Menlo Park, California.

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on

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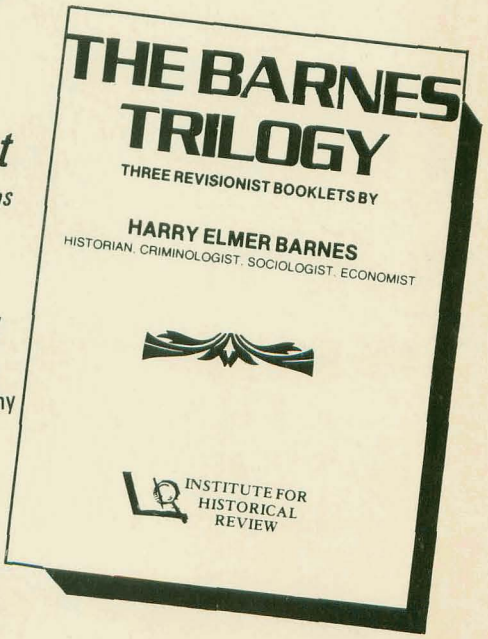

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